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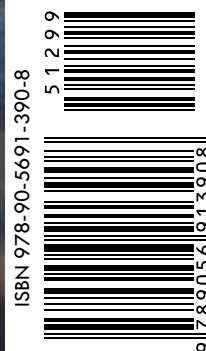
INTERVIEW

**GARRY
KASPAROV**

**'The winds
of history
are no longer
blowing in
Kirsan's
sails'**

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in the world

Fabiano Caruana fears no one



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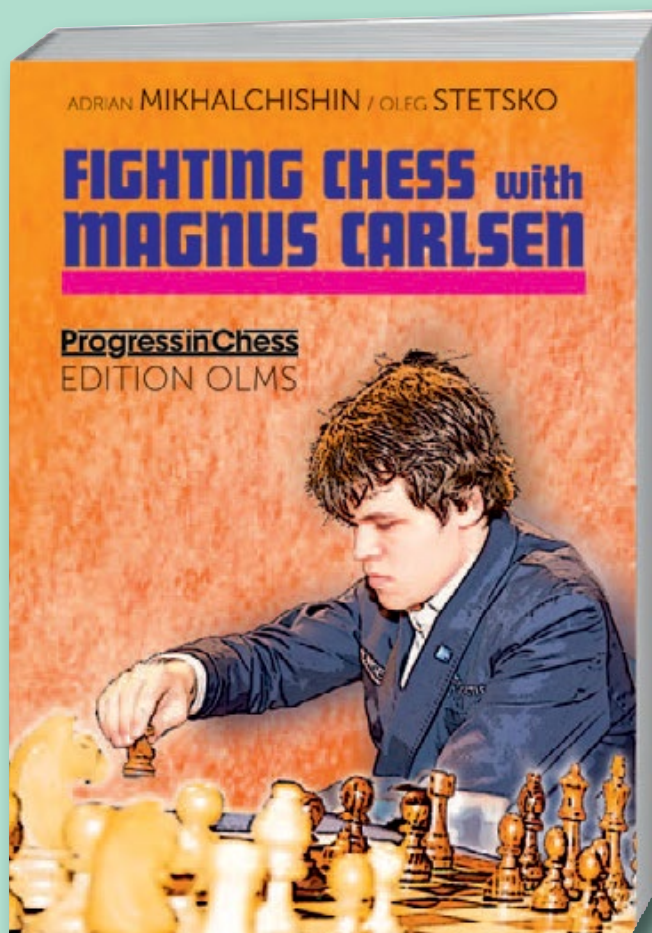


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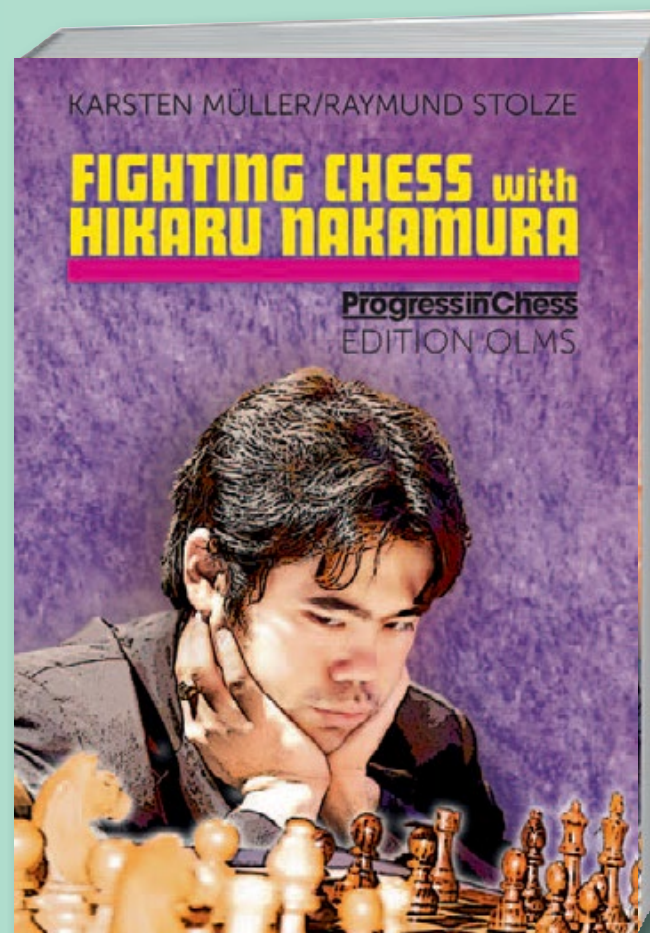
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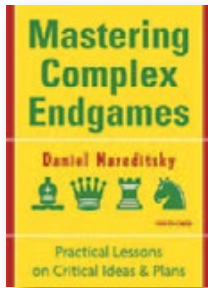
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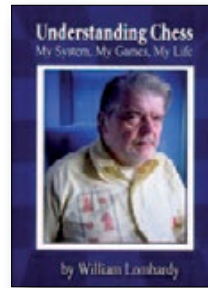


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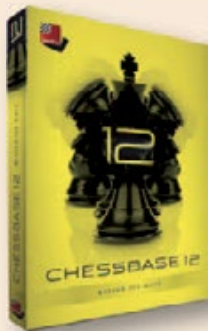


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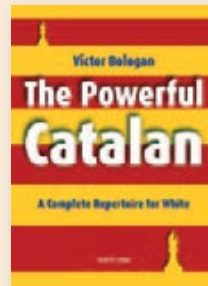


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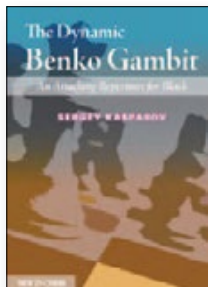


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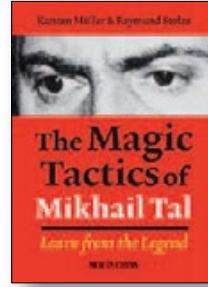


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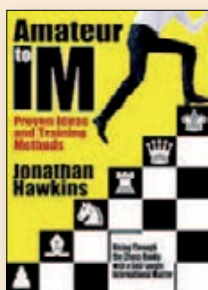


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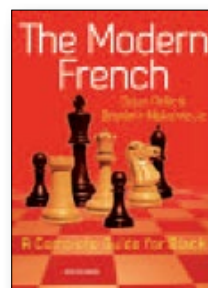


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NEW IN CHESS

PUBLISHER: Allard Hoogland EDITORS-IN-CHIEF: Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam, Jan Timman

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12 Same player shoots again

The Grand Slam Final Masters had all the trademarks of a rushed remake of last year's catch-up classic The Big Chase. Once again a false start forced top-seed Magnus Carlsen to go after one of his rivals, chase him from Sao Paulo to Bilbao, grind him down in a direct encounter and deal the decisive blow in the blitz play-off.

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Grand Slam Final Masters



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Garry Kasparov



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‘Frankly speaking, like one year ago I didn’t think he was (hesitates) much at all. But now I am getting more and more impressed with him in every tournament. He actually reminds me a lot of what I did three or four years ago when during one of these tournaments I became briefly the number one in the live ratings. I think if he keeps going he can do great things.’ – **Magnus Carlsen** on Fabiano Caruana



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Hikaru Nakamura won back precious rating points in Hoogeveen.

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Watching a film on the tragic life of Albin Planinc, Hans Ree remembered the years when the Slovenian scourged the board with fabulous attacks.

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PUBLISHER: Allard Hoogland

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ART-DIRECTION: Jan Scholtus

PRODUCTION: Joop de Groot

TRANSLATORS:

Sarah Hurst, Ken Neat, Piet Verhagen

SALES AND ADVERTISING: Casper Pieters

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BANK DETAILS:

IBAN: NL41 ABNA 0589126024

BIC: ABNANL2A in favour of Interchess BV,
Alkmaar, The Netherlands

WWW.NEWINCHESS.COM

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David Llada, Fred Lucas, Macauley Peterson

COVER PHOTO

Fabiano Caruana: David Llada

Chess Train

Take it easy



Originally welcomed as a revolutionary means of transport that stood for speed and huge time gains, the train is these days often seen as a comfortable way of travelling at your leisure. A perfect place, in short, to play chess, as Czech organizer Pavel Matocha proved for the second year running. This time the Chess Train left from Prague and stopped in Dresden, Wrocław, Piešťany and Vienna before returning to the Czech capital. If the idea of a cultural trip filled with chess appeals to you and you've missed the first two trains, rest assured, there are plans for a third Chess Train next year.

In the central photo Pavel Matocha (waving his hand) is waiting for the train to depart. Seated next to him is Slovak GM Jan Plachetka.







Against all odds

Ever since FIDE introduced the knock-out system in their world championships, the format has had proponents and detractors. The bone of contention seems to be whether as many players as possible should get a shot at the highest title (wouldn't that be desirable?) or whether the champion



Anna Ushenina is the 14th Women's World Champion.

should be the indisputably strongest player around (wouldn't that be wonderful?).

The Women's World Championship in Khanty-Mansiysk is bound to reignite the dispute. While the fans of new World Champion Anna Ushenina, currently rated 2452, will celebrate her biggest success to date, other people will question a championship in which the two top favourites, defending champion Hou Yifan (2606) and Humpy Koneru (2610) were eliminated as early as Round 2, and the title was taken by the 30th seed.

Both Humpy Koneru and Hou Yifan lost to opponents rated more than 150 points lower than them. The Indian top seed was defeated 2-0 by Natalia Zhukova (2451). Hou Yifan went under against Monika Socko (2445). In the first game Hou Yifan was in firm command, but when Socko (with black!) levelled the score in the second game, the World Champion lost control and was knocked out

in the tie-break (0-2). Hou Yifan was in tears after this upset and explained at the press conference that she was suffering from a cold that she caught in Khanty-Mansiysk. Apparently the weather in Siberia did not agree with the other Chinese girls either, as none of them managed to take over the role of their number one. The last survivor was Ju Wenjun, who lost to Ushenina in the semi-finals.

In the final, 27-year-old Ushenina met former World Champion Antoaneta Stefanova (2004-2006). In a nervous affair both players got chances, but in the end the Ukrainian prevailed. With the score tied after the four regular games, a tiebreak was needed to determine the title. In the first rapid game Stefanova had the initiative, but had to settle for a draw after 89 moves. In the second game the roles were reversed and after 91 moves Ushenina did manage to convert her advantage.

At the end of 2013 Ushenina will have to defend her title in a match against the winner of the 2011-12 FIDE Grand Prix, none other than Hou Yifan!

Polgar Day

While the Women's World Championship in Khanty-Mansiysk was in full swing, Judit Polgar, the lady regarded by many people, and not without reason, as the real Queen of Chess, was the centre of attention at the annual Polgar Day in Budapest. Her sisters Susan and Sofi were in attendance as well, of course, and once again the visitors (more than 4,000 this time!) were treated to a varied programme. There was chess-boxing (that potent and curious mix of blows to the brain), an escape artist freeing himself while hanging from the ceiling and playing a game of blitz with Susan, a choreographed chess game and various simul. In one of the simul, against businessmen and artists from all over Europe, American billionaire George Soros, who was

born in Budapest, took part. In another simul, Judit played against 27 children representing the 27 members of the European Union. The youngest of the Polgar sisters is an ambassador of the Chess in the Schools project



The game between Judit Polgar and George Soros saw a Sicilian Defence.

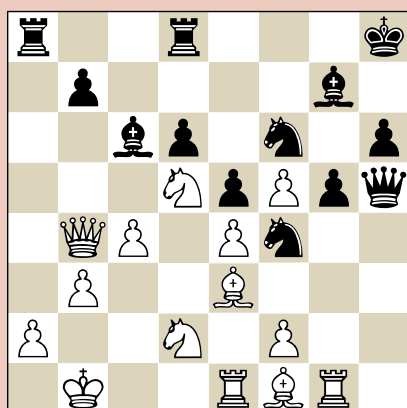
that has the support of the European Parliament, and at the press conference she announced that as from next year chess will be introduced in the curriculum in Hungary as an alternative subject. We wouldn't be surprised if her active support of this initiative played an essential role. Not a mean achievement for a girl who never attended school herself!

One for the family album

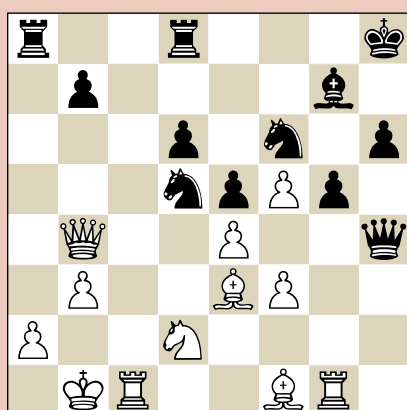
Judit Polgar may be an ambassador of Chess in the Schools, she remains of course, first and foremost, an ambassador of our game wherever it is played. It was in this capacity that she travelled to Mexico City to take part in the UNAM chess festival, a huge gathering of thousands of chess fans attracted by a wide variety of lectures, exhibitions, films and tournaments. The main event was a knockout blindfold tournament with Magnus Carlsen and Judit Polgar as the crowd-pullers. As everyone had hoped, the two met in the final (Carlsen disposed of Lazaro Bruzon, Polgar of Manuel Leon-Hoyos), where Polgar got the spectators in raptures by winning the first game. A historical moment, as it was her first ever defeat of the world's number one.

KI 20.5 – E90
Magnus Carlsen
Judit Polgar
 Mexico City 2012

1.♖f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♙g7 4.e4 d6 5.d4 0-0 6.h3 e5 7.d5 ♘a6 8.♙e3 ♚e8 9.g4 ♘c5 10.♘d2 a5 11.♙e2 c6 12.♙g1 ♙h8 13.h4 ♘g8 14.♚c2 ♙d7 15.0-0-0 cxd5 16.♘xd5 ♘e6 17.h5 g5 18.♙b1 ♙a4 19.b3 ♙c6 20.♘b6 ♖d8 21.♚c3 ♘f4 22.♙f1 h6 23.♚xa5 f5 24.gxf5 ♚xh5 25.♖e1 ♘f6 26.♘d5 ♖a8 27.♚b4 ♖fd8



28.f3 This 'optically understandable' move hands the initiative to Black. According to the engines, White would keep a clear advantage after 28.a4. **28...♚h4 29.♖c1 ♙xd5 30.cxd5** Played too quickly. With the intermediate move 30.♙xf4 ♚xf4 31.cxd5 ♘xd5 32.♚c4 White could have limited the damage. **30...♘4xd5**



Now Black gets a winning advantage and Polgar converts with a steady hand. **31.♙xg5 ♚xg5 32.♖xg5 ♘xb4 33.♙g2 d5 34.exd5 ♘fxd5 35.♘e4 ♘e3 36.f6 ♙f8 37.♖h2 ♖ac8 38.♙c4 ♘xc4 39.bxc4 ♙g8**



In the second game Magnus Carlsen, playing with the black blindfold, had his revenge for the historic defeat in the first game.

40.♖b2 ♖c7 41.c5 ♘d3 42.♖d2 ♖cd7 43.c6 bxc6 44.♖xc6 ♙f7 45.♖b6 ♘c5 46.♖xd7+ ♖xd7 47.♘f2 h5 48.♖c6 ♖d2 49.♘h3 ♘e6 50.a4 ♖h2 White resigned.

Carlsen hit back in the second game and also won the play-off, but it's clear which of these three games will stick in the public's memory.

When he turned 22

Magnus Carlsen may lose the occasional rapid blindfold game against a woman, but in the world rankings the Norwegian remains firmly in control. On the FIDE December list, published one day after his 22nd birthday, Carlsen is still in first place, ahead of Levon Aronian, the only other 2800+ player of the moment, and Vladimir Kramnik. At 2848, Carlsen is three points shy of Garry Kasparov's all-time high, a record he seems poised to break next year.

The current Top-10 underwent few changes. Ivanchuk climbed back to 9th place at the cost of Mamedyarov (now 11) and Grischuk dropped from 9th to 10th place without adding or losing any points. 1. Carlsen (Norway), 2848; 2. Aronian (Armenia), 2815; 3. Kramnik (Russia), 2795; 4. Radjabov (Azerbaijan), 2793; 5. Caruana (Italy), 2782; 6. Anand (India), 2775; 7. Karjakin (Russia), 2775; 8. Topalov (Bulgaria), 2771; 9. Ivanchuk (Ukraine), 2766; 10. Grischuk (Russia), 2764.

After the match

Andrey Filatov, the sponsor of the Anand-Gelfand World Championship match in the Moscow Tretyakov Gallery, keeps making grand gestures to give 20th-century Russian artists the place in art history that he believes they deserve. Filatov, who in a CNN news release was described as 'a professional chess player and businessman', has created an art fund, named the Filatov Family Art Fund, that aims to bring back to Russia paintings, sculptures and drawings that left the country after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. His wish is not only to repatriate Russian art, but also to show that many of the artists are equal in quality to many of their peers in Europe and the U.S.

One of the paintings Filatov bought back from a private collection in the Bahamas is Alexander Laktianov's 'Letter from the Front', painted in 1947 and one of Stalin's favourites. For Filatov it is an 'emotional painting', as it reminds him of his grand-



Alexander Laktianov's
 'Letter from the Front'.

father, who died in 1943 fighting the Germans on the Eastern Front.

The fund hopes to acquire 10 to 12 works from the period of 1917-1991 each year in order to show them in exhibitions in Russia. Filatov has already spent over \$100 million to buy Soviet art works over the last five years. ■



Your Move

Stalemate

I am deeply concerned by the desire of GMs Short and Kaufman, recently expressed in your fine publication, to resurrect the old idea that a win should be awarded for giving stalemate. These gentlemen have made contributions to chess which dwarf anything I could ever hope to achieve, but it seems to me that their proposal would be disastrous for our game.

The impact on endgame theory would obviously be radical: king-and-pawn versus king would almost always be a trivial win, with implications for the vast array of endings that can reduce to it. Many pawnless endings would also be affected. The overall result would be a great increase in the advantage conferred by material superiority.

Players would find it much harder to fall back on a materially unbalanced but drawn ending after unsuccessfully sacrificing material; this would inhibit risk-taking. I therefore very much

doubt that this rule change would enliven chess in the way Mr. Short hopes. It is essential to consider how many great games from chess history would never have happened under his proposal; I suspect the number is considerable.

The aesthetic impact of making stalemate a win would also be grievous. A significant source of paradox

would destroy so much and add so little. Where they see absurdity, I see subtlety and beauty. I hope I am not alone.

Andrew Medworth
Hong Kong, China

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Letters may be edited or abridged

and surprise would be removed from the game, and vast numbers of problems and studies would be invalidated beyond hope of repair.

The current stalemate rule may be 'illogical' in a certain narrow sense, but in all the ways that really matter, the change Short and Kaufman advocate

The F*** word

I have been a subscriber for some time and enjoy your magazine very much. 99.9% of all the articles written I enjoy. But I do have a question, about New In Chess 2012/6, Short Stories on pages 68 and 69. Do you really think it necessary to put the point of the article across by using the F*** word? Oh, please, if you were a complete adult magazine that would be one thing, but you're not. I'm a member of a very large chess club and I know of at least 25 kids under the age of 15 that take the magazine, so be kind and tone it down for the kids' sake. An article like that should not have been written in the first place. Thank You.

Leon Ritchie
Scottsdale, AZ, USA

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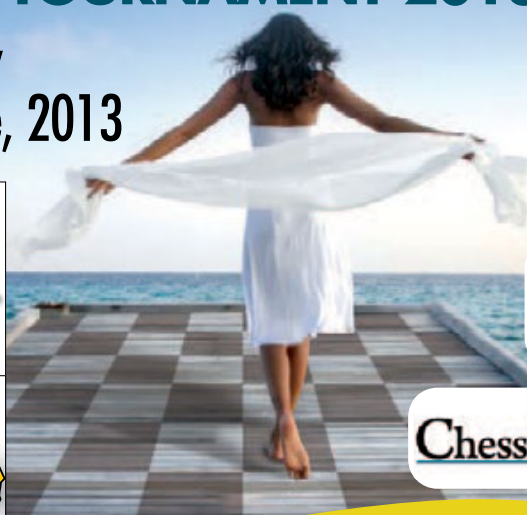
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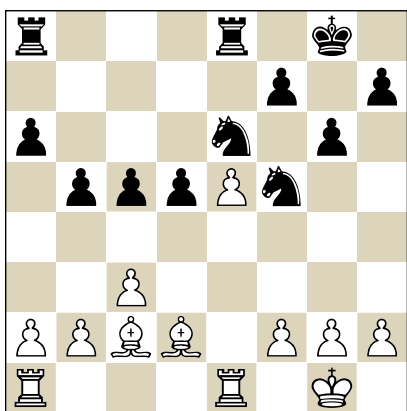
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Cross-examination

I was just about to write something about the Marin article from the last issue with that distinctive cover with the Olympiad faces, when I realised it was from the New In Chess 2012/5 edition with Magnus on the front. The months are passing far too quickly!

Perhaps it is a bit redundant to mention it now, but in one of the positions – the second diagram on page 75, when the queens have been exchanged and it is two bishops against two knights, it seemed to me that White must be better, and Marin didn't try hard enough to show why.



All the lines he mentions are direct assaults on Black's position, but as Marin himself knows, in such situations there is a lot to be said for getting the bishops out of the way of the knights, keeping them as far back as possible, and only then doing something more pointed. In this case I would say something like 25.f4 h5 and perhaps 25.♖ad1 and if say, 25...♗ad8 then 26.♕c1!. If needs be White can even follow up with 27.♕b1!? just for aesthetic effect, to prove the point. There are many possibilities, but I feel White is certainly better, as long as he doesn't rush into anything. The knights are good reactively, but will struggle with the bishops and the kingside majority in the long term, and don't seem to be able to generate enough activity in the short term, to get in White's way. I know that's just a statement, rather than a stream of variations to prove the point, but I wondered at least if Marin considered this way of playing.

Of course, I mention this only because Marin's articles are invariably fresh and of the highest quality, so well worthy of cross-examination.

Jonathan Rowson
Putney, United Kingdom

Postscript Mihail Marin:

I am impressed by Jonathan Rowson's deep and (as far as I understand) accurate evaluation of that critical position from the Fischer-Larsen game. It actually gives me a chance to focus on Larsen's originality from a different angle. True, I have some doubts about the 100% soundness of Black's position, and so might have Larsen. But if the latter is true, just try to imagine: how brave one must be to accept playing that position against Fischer?

As for my personal feelings regarding the position, I am afraid that I would not find the most accurate regrouping with white. But I would not be surprised if a top class player could do it! And I would be confident that I could control Black's position in just one practical game; and immediately after that drop the whole variation!

In conclusion, I am rhetorically asking myself: does the truth exist in chess?

Mihail Marin
Bucharest, Romania

Faces

I recognized many of the faces on the Olympiad special cover (New In Chess 2012/7), but not all. It would have been nice to have a list of who's who on the inside. In particular I wonder if you could name the pretty girl third row from top right side of the page.

Bob Long
Davenport, IA, USA

Editorial postscript:

That is Turkey's Board 2, WGM Betul Cemre Yildiz.

Extreme time-trouble?

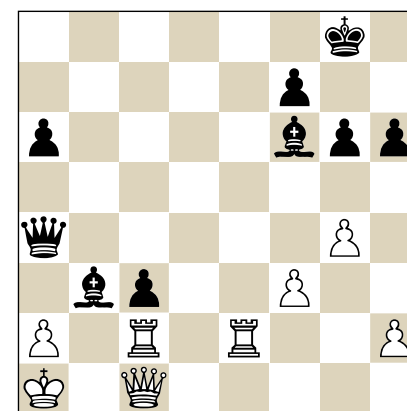
In his very readable article about Svetozar Gligoric in New In Chess 2012/7 your author Jan Timman quotes a

game Hort-Gligoric, commenting on Black's 39th move (...♕xa2): 'The triumph of the black bishop pair'. I ask myself, however, why not 39...c2+ instead, with mate in 2 to follow? Obviously both players were in extreme time-trouble, but was this also true for the annotator!?

Walter Nagorni
Hannover, Germany

Editorial postscript:

You are right. The mistake was our fault. Jan Timman used the correct game score given in *Informant* 10, which has 39.♖ee2 as White's 39th move. However, we used the game score as given in ChessBase, which erroneously has White play 39.♖ce2. This latter move would allow your quicker win. The correct diagram after White's 39th move is:



Hort-Gligoric
Amsterdam 1970
position after 39.♖ee2

Determine by deduction

In New In Chess 2012/7, p. 57, you are asking for help to identify the young 'devoted lady' in one of the pictures taken at the Chess Olympiad in Istanbul.

Well, as can easily be looked up at The Week In Chess, the position on the board in front of her is from the game Noela-Joyce Lomandong versus Ana Berke (Croatia-Monaco, Round 6), apparently after the move 15...♕b7 and before 16.♖f1. So one might assume that the 'devoted lady' is Noela-Joyce Lomandong from Monaco.

Klaus Eckler
Krefeld, Germany



Magnus Carlsen storms the stage where Sao Paulo organizer David Israel is waiting for him with a special prize. Sergey Karjakin and Fabiano Caruana have their own thoughts.

It had all the trademarks of a rushed remake of last year's catch-up classic *The Big Chase* (see *New In Chess* 2011/7), but as no one could be really sure about the outcome (after all we're not talking movies!), the 2012 Grand Slam Final Masters remained thrilling till the very last minutes. Again a false start forced top-seed Magnus Carlsen to go after one of his rivals, chase him from Sao Paulo to Bilbao, grind him down in a direct encounter and deal the decisive blow in the blitz play-off. Following the dramatic example of Ivanchuk in 2011, it was Fabiano Caruana this time who seemed to be racing to victory until he had the world number one breathing down his neck. Still, the 2012 Final Masters will be remembered as Caruana's definite breakthrough into the world elite. As Carlsen commented admiringly: 'He is a really tough customer.'

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam



Same player shoots again

NEW IN CHESS

Sometimes you start suspecting that he does it on purpose. Let's create some excitement, botch up one or two games in the early stages and then make an unlikely comeback in the final rounds. Keep the spectators on the edge of their seats, only catch the frontrunners when everyone believes a small miracle is needed.

He doesn't, of course, but Magnus Carlsen has won so many tournaments from a seemingly hopeless or at least very disadvantageous position by now that you cannot help thinking that half the time he feels like the protagonist in a carefully crafted plot. And he really does. When I asked him at the end of the Grand Slam Final if he sometimes feels as if he is in a script, he immediately replied, as if he had been expecting this question: 'Yes I do.' Adding: 'This is why something is wrong when it doesn't turn out that way. In Biel I had to play catch-up and then I didn't win in the end. That couldn't happen two times in a row.' Was that the wrong script? Did he fire the script-writer? He answered with a grin: 'That was just an accident. Even the best writers sometimes make mistakes.'



Like last year, the Grand Slam Final was split between Sao Paulo and Bilbao. The Basque city welcomed the winners of the various Grand Slam tournaments for the fifth time, but was happy to have the first leg in Brazil again. With the continuing economic crisis in Spain they gladly divided costs and also used the opportunity to send a local business delegation on a fruitful mission to Sao Paulo.

There were immediate signs in the first round that was played in the glass cube in the Ibirapuera Park that Carlsen's script writer wasn't losing any time developing an entrancing plot. His game against Fabiano Caruana lasted 91 moves and could have had any of the three possible outcomes. As Carlsen, who played the French Defence, recapitulated: 'I think I was a little too ambitious in the opening. He surprised me and then I tried to avoid the normal paths. Black's position was very solid, but a little bit passive. As it turned out, the way I played was just awful and already very early on I had to search for ways to prevent myself from losing immediately. Fortunately he didn't play in the most incisive way. Then I took over, winning a pawn, and after the time-control it seemed to me that even though the position was somewhat blocked, I should be able to break through eventually. Then it turned out it wasn't so easy; I burned a lot of time. In the end I found a pretty good plan actually, but I miscalculated something and then he went for this exchange sacrifice. In hindsight it turned out to be wrong, but it was an excellent practical decision, as the line that I thought was winning for me was actually winning for him.'

Carlsen didn't want to blame the fast time-control for the loss (90 minutes for the first 40 moves followed by one hour for the remaining game, with 10-second increments), although it was clear that he had a serious time problem in the crucial phase of the game. He was annoyed, of course, but he found solace in the fact that he had been pressing most of the game and

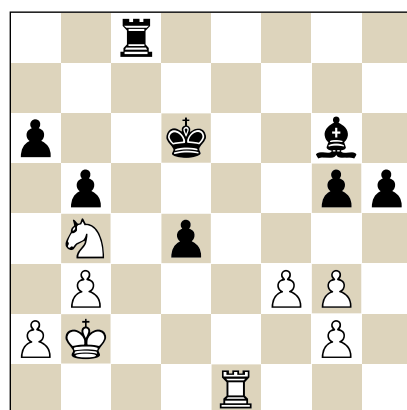


Going by their body language both Magnus Carlsen and Fabiano Caruana seem to know what the blitz playoff has in store for them.

had outplayed his opponent in the middle game.

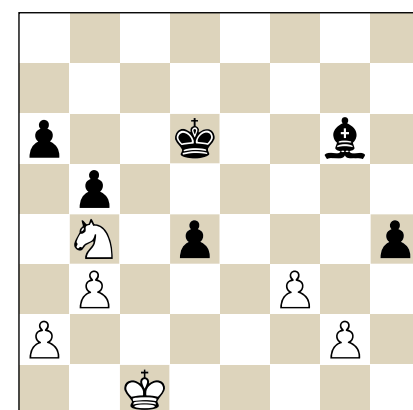
Caruana counted himself lucky, calling his win 'a total accident', but he had also shown fighting spirit when he made a winning attempt after suffering for many moves.

Still, at this point it was hard to predict that these two players would totally dominate the proceedings, relegating the other four to supporting roles, with only a few moments in the lime-light. Yet there was a first glimpse in the second round when Caruana won an excellent game against Sergey Karjakin and Carlsen defeated Vallejo with a beautiful manoeuvre in the endgame.

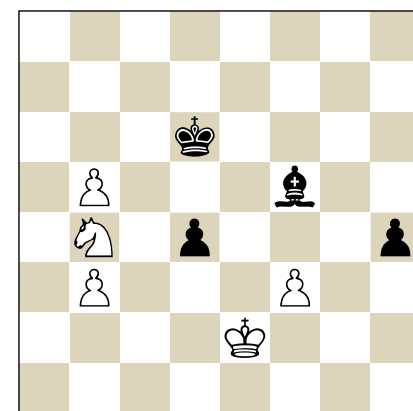


Vallejo-Carlsen
position after 30...♔d6

31.♖c1 White hopes to relieve the pressure by exchanging rooks, but this hope is soon dashed. **31...♖xc1** **32.♕xc1 h4** The black h-pawn will prove a headache. **33.gxh4 gxh4**

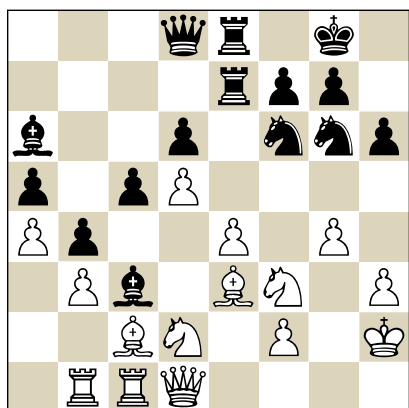


34.♕xa6 Taking the plunge; but what can you do when you see that the pawn ending after 34.♕c2 ♕xc2 35.♕xc2 ♕e5 is hopelessly lost, e.g. 36.♕d3 ♕f4 37.♕xd4 ♕g3 38.♕e5 ♕xg2 39.f4 h3 and the black h-pawn is too quick. **34...♕d3** **35.♕b4 ♕f1** **36.♕d2 ♕xg2** **37.♕e2 ♕h3** **38.a4 ♕f5** **39.axb5**



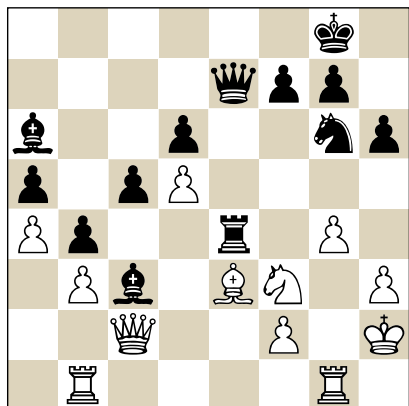
39...d3+ The point. The pawn cannot be taken, as this would allow the black h-pawn to break through. **40.♕e3 h3** **41.♕xd3 ♕xd3** White resigned.

Caruana blew up Karjakin's defences with two exchange sacrifices.

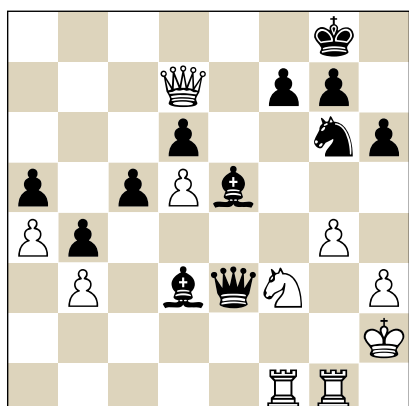


Karjakin-Caruana
position after 26.g4

This position arose from a Ruy Lopez. Have a look at the pieces and it is not hard to say who did the better manoeuvring. And now it's time for a couple of exchange sacrifices. **26... ♖xe4! 27. ♗xe4 ♜xe4 28. ♙xe4 ♜xe4 29. ♔c2 ♔e7 30. ♜g1** And here comes number two.



30... ♖xe3! 31.fxe3 ♔xe3 32.♜bf1 ♙e2 The white rooks are no match for the black bishops. **33. ♔f5 ♙d3** Another way to harvest was 33... ♗h4 34. ♗xh4 ♙e5+, but when you want to show the might of your bishops this is the way to go. **34. ♔d7 ♙e5+**



35. ♔h1 Neutralizing one attacker doesn't bring any relief: 35. ♗xe5 ♔xe5+ 36. ♔h1 ♙e4+ 37. ♜g2 ♗f4, and it's curtains. **35... ♙e4 36. ♔e8+ ♗f8** White resigned.

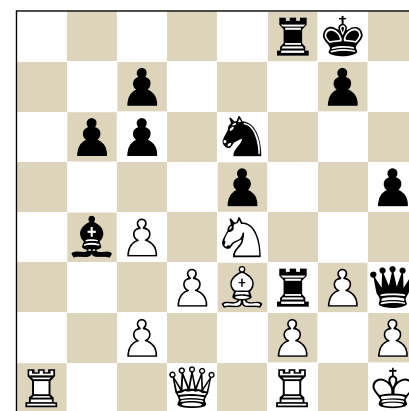
This was Karjakin's second loss in a row after running into a fine piece of opening preparation against Levon Aronian in Round 1. This atrocious start seemed to spell disaster for the young Russian, but at the end of the day Karjakin was not too disappointed. He didn't suffer any more losses, and thanks to a win over Vallejo he even made a positive score in the second half.

Aronian's fine win in the first round seemed to herald an active participation in the fight for first place, but his ambitions stranded immediately afterwards. The Armenian's remaining games only yielded him a string of draws and one loss that had a considerable impact on the final standings. At the end of the tournament Aronian took a sober view: 'I tried but it didn't work out, as simple as that.' A modest conclusion, given the fact that in the first leg he could have beaten both Carlsen and Caruana, who miraculously escaped from a lost position.

Caruana summed up the Sao Paulo leg as follows: 'In the first half a lot of players weren't playing very well. It was clear that both Magnus and Levon were a bit out of form. There were a lot of blunders. And my games were very uneven as well. But somehow I managed to handle it all a bit better.'

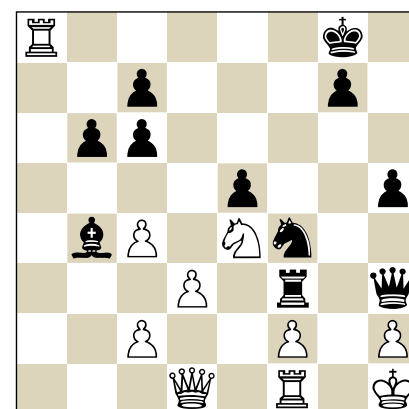
Did he say that Carlsen was in bad form too? He did, and the Norwegian was the first to confirm this assessment: 'The most upsetting thing in Sao Paulo (after the first two rounds) was my play in the next three rounds. That wasn't very good. I made an awful blunder against Aronian, against Karjakin I failed to make the most of my advantage and against Anand, too, my play was too indecisive to exploit my advantage.'

Carlsen's oversight against Aronian will find its way into various text-books.



Carlsen-Aronian
position after 26... ♔h3

Both players were running short of time. 'Optically', Black has the better position, but White should be able to hold without too many problems. Carlsen spots a neat 'trick' to simplify the position. **27. ♙f4? ♙c3** And Aronian believes him. He could have claimed the point (or should we say points?) with 27... ♜8xf4! 28.gxf4 ♗xf4, and now after 29. ♜a8+



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Black doesn't play 29... ♔h7, which Aronian had noticed in a flash and which runs into 30. ♗g5+, but the cool 29... ♙f8, and there is no way for White to prevent mate, for example 30. ♜g1 ♔xh2+! 31. ♔xh2 ♜h3 mate. **28. ♔xf3 ♙xa1 29. ♔g2 ♔f5 30. ♙d2 ♙d4** and the game ended in a draw after 48 moves.

Indeed, Caruana managed to 'handle it all a bit better', and at the end of the first leg the Italian grandmaster topped the field with 11 points from 5 games, thanks to his wins over Carlsen, Karjakin and Vallejo (and the football scoring system of 3 points for a win). Aronian was second, four points adrift,

with Carlsen on six points, one point ahead of World Champion Anand, who had drawn all his games.

It was tempting to believe Caruana was heading straight for his greatest success to date. But that was not what he was thinking himself when he flew back to the Old World: 'It's like playing two distinct tournaments. What happens in the first half doesn't have any bearing on the second half. In general you can wipe the slate clean, regardless of whether you have a bad first leg or a good one. With a break that big anything can happen. I wasn't at all sure of victory after I'd been doing so well in the first half. I realized that I was very close to winning and that I only had to do one thing: survive against Magnus.'

And again the Norwegian totally agreed: 'I thought that everything came down to the first game in Bilbao. If I beat Caruana, I'd have a chance and if I didn't I wouldn't. But that's normal. I've had games like that before that I needed to win. Sometimes I don't manage, but sometimes I do.'

This time he managed it again, and it was a majestic effort that Carlsen annotates below. He didn't only impress the spectators, but also his opponent. As Caruana acknowledged: 'He just outplayed me. I didn't even play so badly. Let's say I played far worse in my first game against him. He played a very good technical game and didn't give me many chances. It was kind of funny, because after the game I couldn't even point out a clear mistake I made. I was going through the game, backtracking from the end, and I realized that my mistake might have been a5 on move 7 (laughs). I mean, it can't be but I couldn't find anything clear after that. He has this tendency to win these technical games. Make the most of any slight advantage he gets. I realized when I got into this endgame that I was pretty much on his territory. And this guy will make this as uncomfortable for me as he can.'

With this win Carlsen moved into striking distance of Caruana, and

the very next day he annihilated the two-point difference that still separated them when Caruana drew with Karjakin and he himself demolished Vallejo.

The fight for tournament victory reached a dramatic climax in Round 9. Carlsen was White against Anand in a game that was important for more than one reason, while Caruana had the white pieces against Aroonian. Those lucky enough to be in the Alhondiga that day witnessed a historical round.

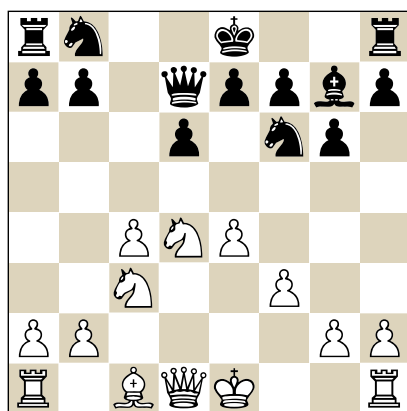
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Magnus Carlsen

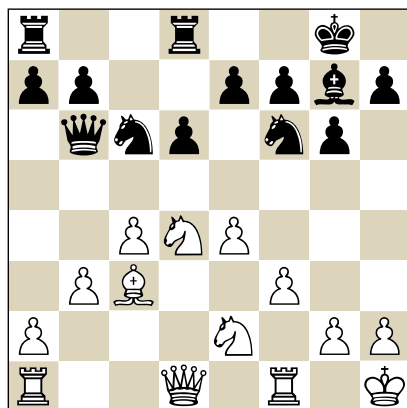
Vishy Anand

Sao Paulo/Bilbao 2012 (9)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♙b5+ ♕d7 4. ♙xd7+ ♚xd7 5.c4 ♘f6 6.♘c3 g6 7.d4 cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♙g7 9.f3

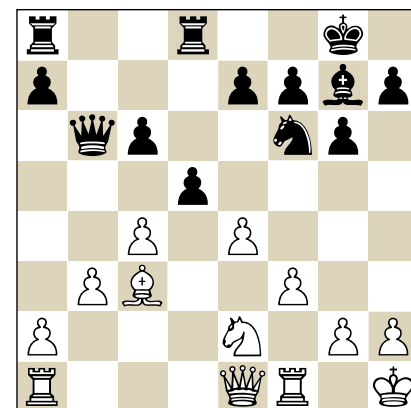


9...♚c7 A novelty, probably showing that Anand was still in his preparation. 9...0-0 had been played earlier. **10.b3 ♚a5 11.♙b2 ♘c6 12.0-0 0-0 13.♘ce2 ♖fd8 14.♙c3 ♚b6 15.♙h1**



15...d5! And Black should be fine.

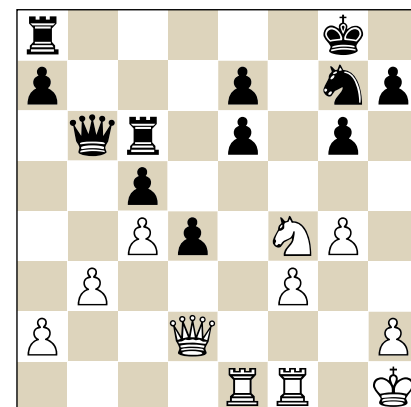
16.♘xc6 As he indicated after the game, Carlsen, for understandable reasons, was not interested in 16.cxd5 ♘xd5 17.exd5 ♖xd5 18.♘xc6 ♖xd1 19.♘xe7+ ♙h8 20.♖axd1 ♚e6. **16... bxc6 17.♚e1**



17...♖dc8? This move was condemned by Anand after the game. He indicated 17...♖e8 as the correct move, when after 18.e5 ♘d7 19.e6 fxe6 20.♙xg7 ♙xg7 21.♘f4 e5 Black is perfectly fine.

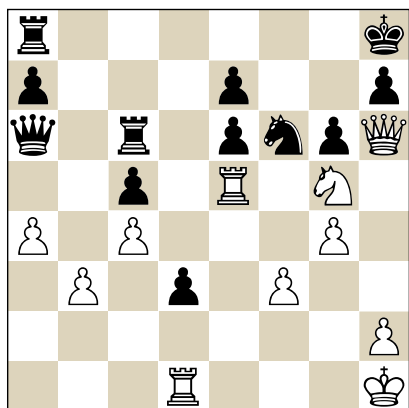
18.e5! Now this push, followed by the further advance, is much stronger, disturbing the coordination between the black pieces.

18...♘e8 19.e6 fxe6 20.♘f4 ♙xc3 21.♚xc3 d4 22.♚d2 c5 23.♖ae1 ♘g7 24.g4 Restraining the knight on g7. **24...♖c6** And now comes the move of the tournament. Carlsen had been looking at moves like 25.♖e5, until he spotted:



25.♘h3! A great move that is easy to find once you've seen it! The threat of ♚h6, followed by ♘g5, will give White an iron grip on Black's position. **25...♘e8 26.♚h6 ♘f6 27.♘g5 d3**

A logical last-ditch attempt, but White replies: **28.♖e5** Threatening the devastating **29.♗xh7. 28...♔h8 29.♖d1 ♕a6 30.a4**



And being a pawn down, the World Champion resigned. There's nothing he can do against White's plan to first arrest the pawn on d3, then win the pawn on e6 and then, being a pawn up, wreak further havoc.

After he had resigned, Anand walked away from the board with frustration written all over his face. He was clearly at a loss why he couldn't get a grip on his play. Knowing that some of his colleagues are doubting his motivation and eagerness, he didn't even want to come up with an explanation. Asked for an explanation anyway, he suggested I write what he had said after other recent disappointments; that he was at a loss himself as well, that he really didn't know.

Carlsen remained seated at the board for a while, smiling broadly. When he walked out of the players' zone, he showed his happiness with a telling 'worse things could have happened today', and later he commented: 'This is special for me, obviously, and I think it was a pretty good game. I especially liked knight h3. It's an unusual kind of domination that White gets after that.'

But the round was not over yet. Caruana had come to his game against Aronian in a good mood, feeling that he had chances. It would be misleading to say that he stepped up his efforts when Carlsen had won, but there was no denying that he looked totally focused and determined when he got



Round 9 saw two dramatic clashes, Magnus Carlsen's defeat of World Champion Vishy Anand and Fabiano Caruana's sensational win against Levon Aronian.

his chance to defeat Aronian. In the notes below, Caruana describes the way he defeated the world's number two. His win made a deep impression on everyone, including Carlsen: 'Yeah, I am enormously impressed. Not only by his start, which is one thing, but that he came back. From his loss in the

Carlsen on his win against Anand: 'I especially liked knight h3, it's an unusual kind of domination that White gets after that.'

first round here he just kept on going and played very good chess. And beat Aronian, I mean, that's a huge achievement. Because not everyone would have the mental strength to come back after this loss.'

Thanks to Caruana's win the last

round promised to be highly exciting. Carlsen was Black against Aronian, who might have awaited this moment to light up his tournament. Caruana also had the black pieces and would no doubt try to find ways to defeat Paco Vallejo, who had probably been mentally destroyed by getting only one meagre draw from his last two games against Aronian and Karjakin instead of the two wins that seemed feasible.

Sadly, all excitement vanished prematurely when, much to Caruana's dismay, Vallejo went for a well-known drawing mechanism in the Ruy Lopez that Black cannot avoid without seriously compromising his position. From all the possibilities he had been looking at, this was the one Caruana had not expected from an opponent who is known for his fighting chess. Understandably, Caruana was speechless and inwardly appalled when, at the press conference, the first question was why he had made such a short draw. While Caruana was raging inside, Vallejo explained that utter disappointment about his previous games had brought him to this decision, and that he was so dejected that he was going to take a serious break from chess. The audience showed understanding and thanked him with applause, a kind move that visibly touched him. But you still won-

der what to think of Vallejo's refusal to play on the decisive day of the tournament, especially since he hadn't qualified, but had been invited as a friendly gesture, an appreciation for his position in Spanish chess.

With what seemed the crucial game over, all that remained was waiting to see if Aronian and Carlsen would reach the draw that would lead to a blitz play-off between Carlsen and Caruana for the title. As Carlsen never got any chance to play for a win and Aronian's edge never took on serious dimensions, the draw after 44 moves was a natural result.

For the second year running, first prize in the Grand Slam Final was decided by blitz games. Whether this is a satisfactory tiebreaker remains a matter of taste, but the Alhondiga was certainly the right place for this climax. Everyone knows that the vast majority of spectators follow the games online in the comfort of their homes these days, but if you are in the habit of attending major events, there are moments that sitting in empty sports halls or theatres with four other visitors becomes slightly depressing. How different was the atmosphere in Bilbao, where hundreds of spectators surrounded the glass cube, breathlessly watching the games and listening to the live commentary and the interviews on stage.

What they got to see was certainly spectacular, but also a bit painful. In blitz, Caruana was no match for Carlsen. In the first game he was gradually outplayed on the white side of a Berlin Defence, while in the second game they had barely started when it was all over.

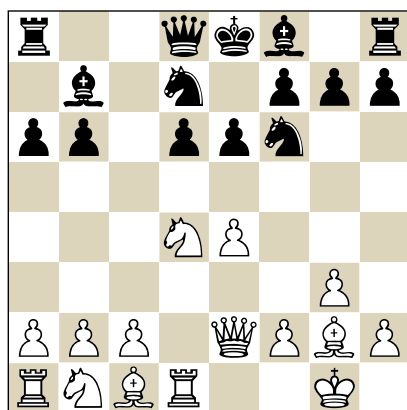
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Magnus Carlsen

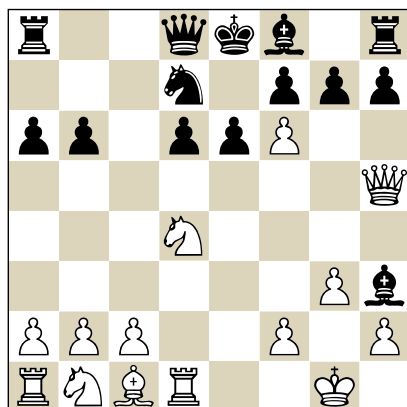
Fabiano Caruana

Bilbao 2021 2 blitz tie-break (2)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.g3 b6 4.♙g2 ♗b7 5.♙e2 d6 6.d4 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♗f6 8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.♙d1 a6? Not wanting to see the knight appear on b5, Black takes a seemingly innocent precaution that is instantly punished.



10.e5! ♙xg2 This leads to disaster, but it is understandable that Caruana expected little from 10...dxe5 11. ♙xb7 exd4 12. ♙xa8 ♙xa8 13. ♙xd4, and Black is simply an exchange down without any compensation. **11.exf6 ♗h3 12.♙h5** This queen sortie is the clincher.



12...♙xf6 Black cannot protect the bishop and ward off the threats against his king at the same time, as 12...♙f5 13. ♘xf5 exf5 14. ♙e2+ also loses a piece. **13.♙xh3 ♗e7 14.♘c3 ♙g6 15.♘c6 ♗e5 16.♘xe7 ♙xe7 17. ♙f4** and with an unsafe king and a piece down Caruana had had enough and resigned.

The quick wipe-out didn't come as a surprise to either player. Caruana knows that he needs to warm up to play some decent blitz. If this is not the case he knows all too well what can happen, as he experienced at the Tal Memorial where he finished last in the blitz tournament that served as the drawing of lots. 'I didn't rate my chances very highly in the blitz, unfortunately. First of all, it's not that I am a terrible blitz player, but I need a few games to get acclimated. In the first two games I just blundered eve-

rything. And that was kind of the problem, since it's only two games.'

Carlsen, on the other hand, knew few doubts: 'Yes, I was very confident. The only pitfall was that I would not be used to the blitz, that I would need some time to adjust. But I felt that I adjusted pretty well and then it was... easy (laughs).'

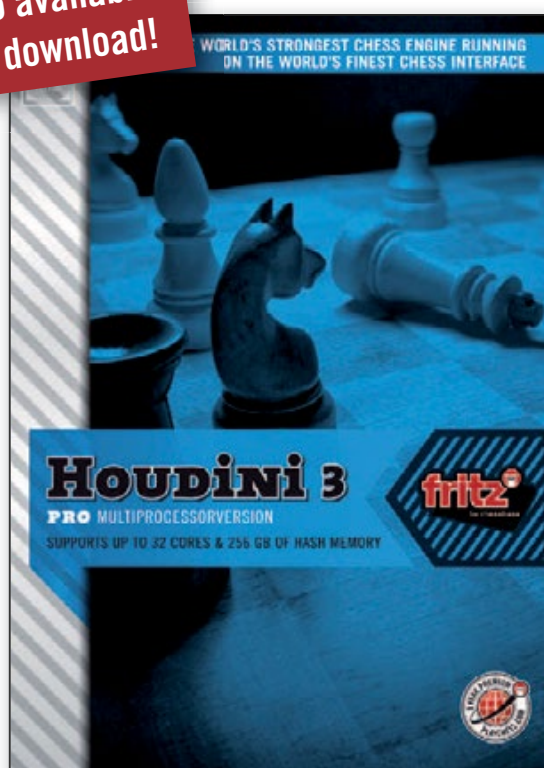
And so Carlsen won again, deservedly, as is always the case with the winner. Still, Fabiano Caruana, who has jumped into the world top within the space of one year, remained the revelation of the tournament. But he emphasizes that this year not only yielded him successes: 'I had some bad tournaments, mainly opens, when I played too much. The Greek league was a low point. I lost a lot of rating points and was really dissatisfied with my play. In the last round of the Tal Memorial I lost to Aronian, and then all my results were bad till Dortmund. Even the start of Dortmund was bad, so I was really unhappy for some time. But in general I have noticed that after I reach a certain level I don't drop below it. So I hope that this will continue and that I won't drop out of the Top-10, or even the Top-5 now, which is a bit unexpected. But I don't feel any different. It's all numbers, you know, and it's all decided by details and games between nearly equally strong opponents. But I feel more comfortable against all these players. And my score against them isn't so bad either. I'm not dominating anyone or any tournaments, but in pretty much all the top tournaments I have played in I have achieved good results – at least this year. I got second place in nearly all of them, except Dortmund.' Which is true, because he won there.

Suddenly Caruana has become one of the boys. As Carlsen put it: 'Frankly speaking, like one year ago I didn't think he was (hesitates) much at all. But now I am getting more and more impressed with him in every tournament. He actually reminds me a lot of what I did three or four years ago, when during one of these tournaments I became briefly the number one in the live ratings. I think that if he keeps going, he will do great things.'



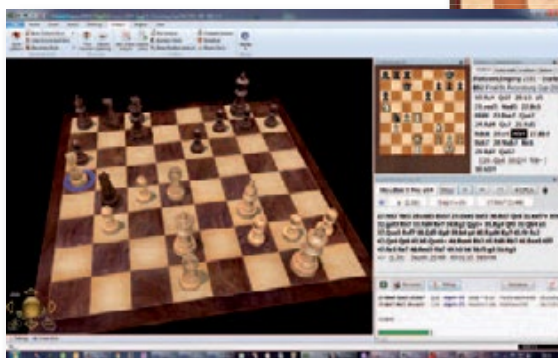
Houdini 3

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System requirements:

Minimum: Pentium III 1 GHz, 1 GB RAM, Windows Vista, XP (Service Pack 3), DirectX9 graphics card with 256 MB RAM, DVD-ROM drive, Windows Media Player 9 and Internet access to activate the program, Playchess.com, Let's Check, Engine Cloud and updates.

Recommended: PC Intel Core i7, 2.8 GHz, 4 GB RAM, Windows 7 or Windows 8, DirectX10 graphics card (or compatible) with 512 MB RAM or more, 100% DirectX10 compatible sound card, Windows Media Player 11, DVD ROM drive and Internet access to activate the program, Playchess.com, Let's Check, Engine Cloud and updates.

*Access to "Let's Check" till 31.12.2015



NOTES BY
Magnus Carlsen

FR 2.12 – C00
Magnus Carlsen
Fabiano Caruana
Sao Paulo/Bilbao 2012 (6)

1.e4 e6 2.d3

The French Defence was a huge surprise to me, so I decided to apply the same strategy that had brought me my only victory so far in the tournament, namely push the d-pawn one square forward as early as possible.

2...d5 3.♘d2 ♘f6 4.♘gf3 ♘c6

A perfectly reasonable way of avoiding the 'fearsome' King's Indian Attack, which starts with 4...c5 5.g3 and so on.

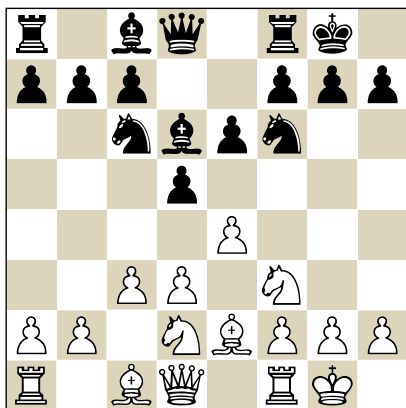
5.c3 ♘d6

This looks a little weird, but is actually quite logical. After the immediate 5...e5, or 5...dxe4 6.dxe4 e5, Black would have to reckon with the b4-push.

6.♗e2 It seemed to me that the bishop would have more work here than on g2 after a subsequent 6...dxe4 7.dxe4 e5, and besides, this move seemed to fit better with ideas of pushing b4.

6...0-0 7.0-0

7.b4, here or on the previous move, could have been met effectively by 7...dxe4 8.dxe4 a5 9.b5 ♘e5, and White has gained some space but also weakened some squares, so Black should be doing fine.



7...a5 Black had several choices here.

– 7...e5 would be met by 8.b4, and White has a clearly excellent version of the Philidor. Whether that

would be sufficient for an advantage, though, is quite unclear.

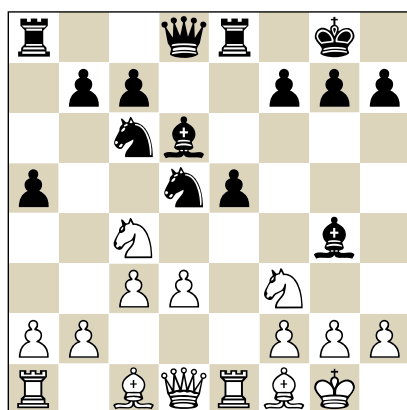
– 7...b6 8.♗e1 ♘b7 9.♗f1 seems a little artificial for Black.

– 7...♗e8 8.♗e1 a5 9.♗f1 e5 10.exd5 ♘xd5 11.♘c4 would transpose to the game.

8.♗e1 e5 9.exd5

Other Philidor-style moves like 9.♗f1 or 9.b3 were certainly possible, but I felt like forcing things a bit.

9...♘xd5 10.♘c4 ♗e8 11.♗f1 ♗g4



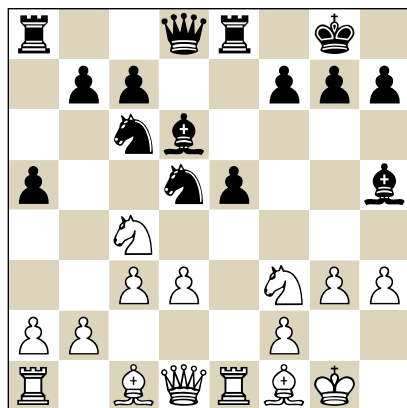
12.h3

12.g3 is not as accurate, as Black can play 12...♗d7, when the annoying bishop cannot be kicked with h3. I actually tried that in a similar position against Ponomarev in a blitz game once, who with a puzzled look on his face simply captured the pawn.

12...♗h5 13.g3

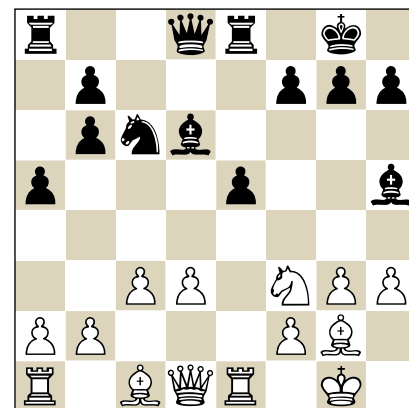
Once the e4-pawn is not there to obstruct it, the bishop is re-deployed to the long diagonal.

Going on a fishing expedition with 13.g4 ♗g6 14.♗b3, as the comp seems to recommend, would probably have appealed to me on the next day against Paco, when I was in more of a coffeehouse mood.



13...♘b6 A decent move, made after a long think. As you might have guessed, by this point we were both way 'out of book'.

14.♘xb6 cxb6 15.♗g2



15...b5? This one, however, is rather questionable, as will become apparent after a few more moves.

15...a4 would have retained equal chances.

16.a4!

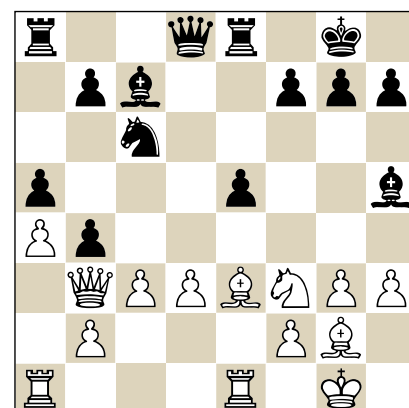
Favourably fixing the black queenside pawns on dark squares.

16...b4

16...bxa4 17.♗xa4 also gives Black plenty to worry about.

17.♗e3 ♗c7 18.♗b3

Now the queen is active, and soon the knight will be taken to d2 and e4, when all the white minor pieces will be much more active than their black counterparts.

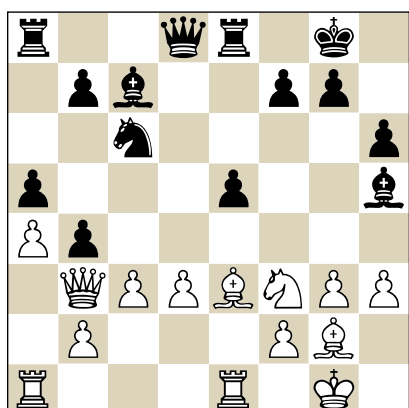


18...h6

It's not so easy to find a more useful move for Black here.

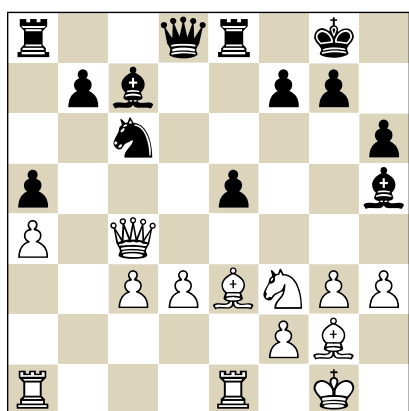
– 18...♗xd3? loses immediately: 19.♗ad1 ♗a6 (19...♗e4 20.♘h4 ♗xd1 21.♗xd1) 20.g4 ♗g6 21.♗f1, and the queen is trapped.

– 18... ♖xf3 19. ♖xf3 ♔xd3 is possible, but even here Black has a very unpleasant position after 20. ♜ad1 ♔f5 21. ♖g4 ♔g6 22. ♜d7 ♜ac8 23. ♖e2!, with the threat of ♜xf7.



19. ♖c4 According to a Russian GM, this was the move of a second-category (1600) player. He instead recommended 19. ♘h4, which looks very attractive, as after 19... ♔xd3 20. ♜ad1 ♖xd1 21. ♜xd1 ♔h7 22. ♜d7 ♜e7 23. ♖xc6 White wins. 19... ♔c8, however, bothered me a little, as after 20. g4 ♔d8! 21. ♘f5 ♖g6 it is not entirely clear what White has achieved.

19... ♖xc3 20. ♖xc3



20... e4 Otherwise, the pressure on the queenside would quickly have become unbearable.

21. dxe4 I played this and the next few moves quickly, as I couldn't wait to get to torture him in the endgame. 21. ♘d4 would have been even stronger. I would probably have considered it, had I noticed that after 21... ♘e5 22. ♔b5 ♘xd3 the bishop is actually hanging: 23. ♔xh5.

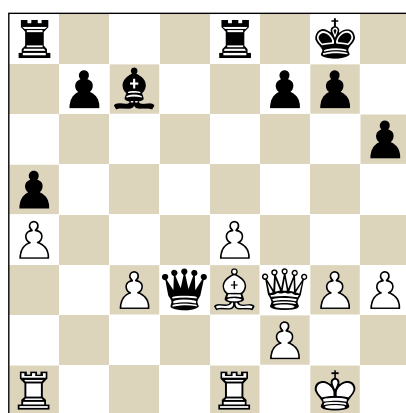
21... ♖xf3 22. ♖xf3 ♘e5 23. ♔e2 ♘xf3+ 24. ♔xf3 ♔d3

The position has been simplified quite



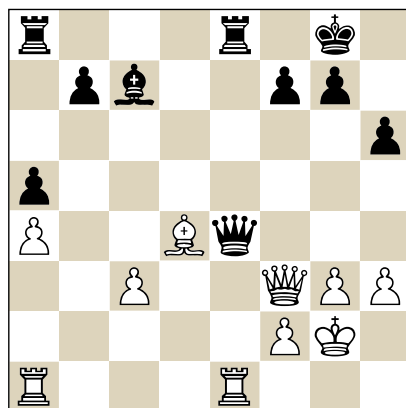
Wijk aan Zee organizer Dolf Vos crowned Magnus Carlsen with the traditional Basque beret.

a bit, but I had seen many moves ago that even in the endgame Black is far away from a draw.



25. ♖g2! This is much stronger than 25. ♜ab1 ♔xe4 26. ♔xe4 ♜xe4 27. ♜xb7 ♖e5, when Black is pretty close to a draw, e.g. 28. ♖d2 ♜xe1+ 29. ♖xe1 ♜c8 30. ♜b5 ♖xc3 31. ♖xc3 ♜xc3.

25... ♔xe4 26. ♖d4



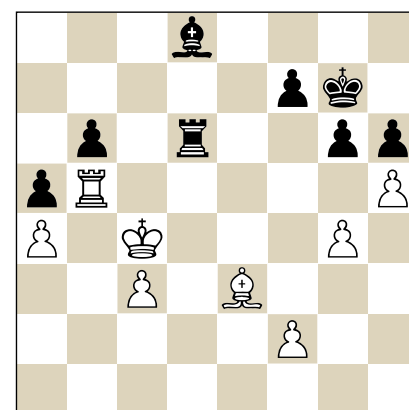
26... ♔xf3+ 26... ♔c6 27. ♔xc6 ♖xc6 28. ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 29. ♜b1 also

gives Black a very difficult defence. **27. ♖xf3 b6 28. ♜ab1 ♜ac8 29. ♜e4 g6** 29...h5 seems logical, in order not to be stuck with a weak pawn on a dark square, but then after 30. ♜b5 g6 31. g4 hxg4+ 32. hxg4 he might have to deal with a rook penetrating via the h-file at some point.

29...f6 might be the best way to arrange the pawns, but even here, after an eventual g4/h5, Black will have problems on both flanks.

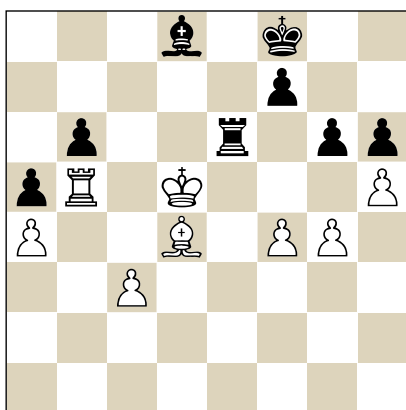
30. g4! Fixing the pawn on h6.

30... ♖f8 31. h4 ♜xe4 32. ♖xe4 ♜e8+ 33. ♖d3 ♜e6 34. ♖e3 ♖g7 35. ♜b5 ♖d8 36. h5 ♜d6+ 37. ♖c4

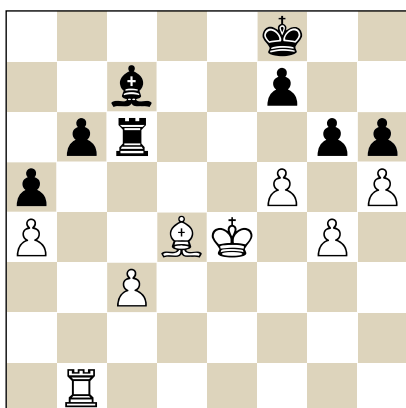


37... ♜c6+ Caruana suggested 37...f5 as a possible improvement. I intended to keep the pressure with 38.f3, when Black can exchange a couple of pawns, but is still a long way from a draw after 38...fxg4 39.fxg4 gxh5 40.gxh5.

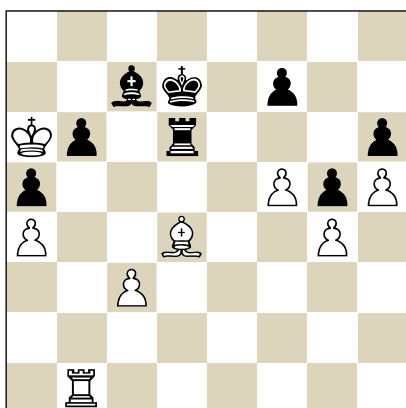
38. ♖d5 ♜e6 39. ♖d4+ ♖f8 40. f4



With the pawn coming to f5, I felt pretty sure that I was winning. White just gains more and more ground, and eventually Black cannot hold on to everything. **40...c7 41.f5 d6+ 42.e4 c6 43.b1**

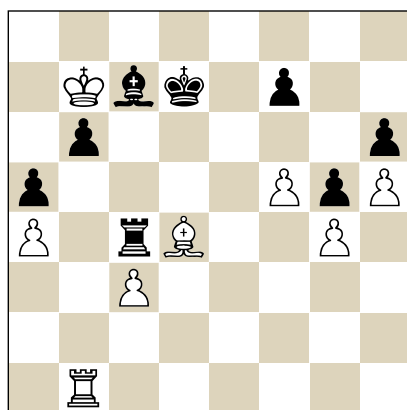


43...e8 Allowing a more or less forced win, but the position was lost in any case.
– 43...g5 closes the kingside, but now the king creates havoc on the queen-side, while g7 is always an issue: 44.d5 d6+ 45.c4 e7 46.b5 d7 47.a6



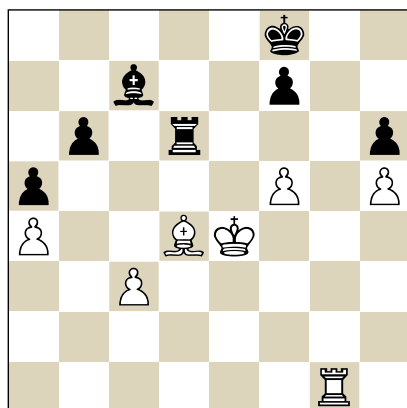
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

47...c6 (or 47...c6 48.xb6 d8 49.b5 a8+ 50.a7, and White wins) 48.b7 c4



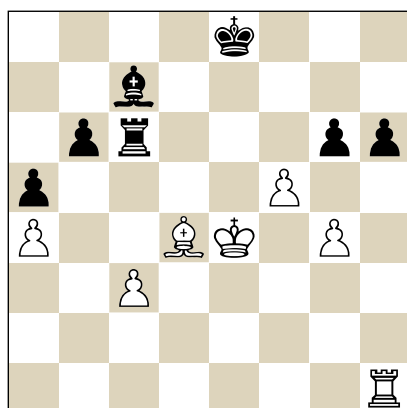
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

49.g7! d6 (49...xg4 50.d1+ d6 51.e5) 50.xh6 xg4 51.g7 h4 52.d1 e7 53.c6! c4+ 54.xb6 xa4 55.h1, and the h-pawn will cost Black a rook.
– 43...gxh5 44.gxh5 c4 45.a1 c6 46.g1 d6 (46...c4 allows White to finish in style: 47.d5 xa4 48.g4! a1 49.c6 h2 50.g7+ e8 51.e4+ d8 52.f6+, and mate next)

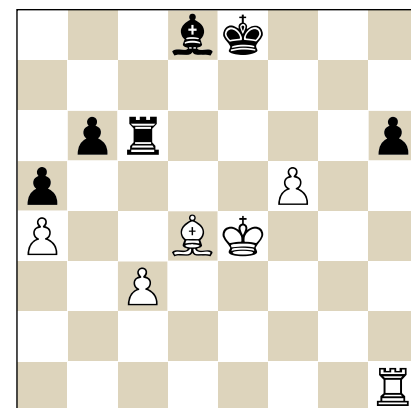


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

47.e5! (47.g7?? xd4+) 47...c6 48.g7+ e7 49.d4 f8 50.g7, and the rook penetrates with decisive effect. **44.hxg6!** Reducing the number of pawns, but I had seen a more or less forced win. **44...fxg6 45.h1**

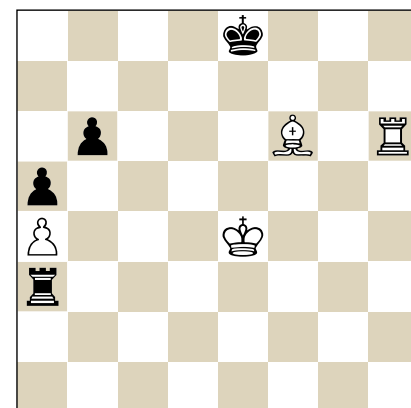


45...f7?! 45...gxf5+ 46.gxf5 d8 (46...c4 47.d5 xa4 48.xh6 wins easily, despite the limited material) was certainly the most tenacious defence, and the line I had spent the most time calculating:



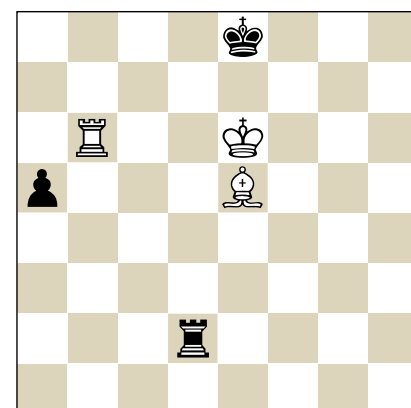
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

47.f6! xf6 48.xh6 xc3! (other moves lose rather trivially) 49.xf6 (49.xc3?? xc3 50.xb6 is a table-base draw!) 49...a3 (49...c4+ 50.d5 xa4 51.e6 e4+ 52.e5)



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

50.h7! (50.d5 f7 and draws) 50...xa4+ 51.d5 a2 52.e6 e2+ 53.e5 f2 54.b7 d2 55.xb6



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM



CHESSBASE 12



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ity to the position on the board. Access to a whole heap of endings with the same distribution of material on modern 64-Bit systems is gained in a few seconds only. And what works with endgames can also be transferred to mid-game positions. In this case too, a search is instigated for pawn structures which are almost similar to the position on the board and the similarity is considered on the basis of the position of the pieces.

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System requirements: Minimum: Minimum: Pentium III 1 GHz, 1 GB RAM, Windows Vista, XP (Service Pack 3), DirectX9 graphics card with 256 MB RAM, DVD-ROM drive, Windows Media Player 9 and Internet access to activate the program, Playchess.com, Let’s Check, Engine Cloud and updates.

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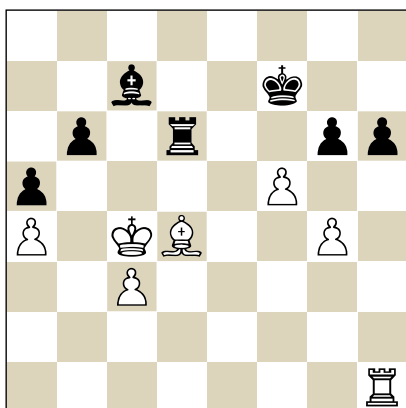
Only after you have returned your CB11 registration number!

*) the service lasts till 31.12.2015

and the tablebase shows a win in 23 moves. In fact, the win is quite simple as soon as White captures the pawn, as has been shown many times, for instance in the recent game Grischuk-Kamsky from the Olympiad (see New In Chess 2012/7, p.15 – ed.).

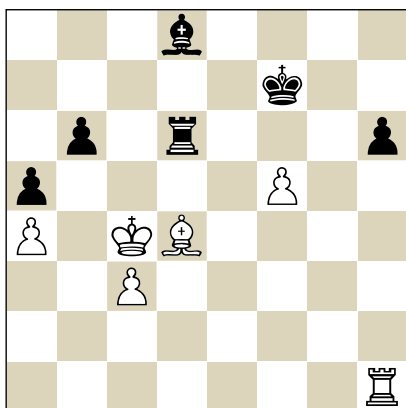
46. ♖d5 ♜d6+ 47. ♖c4

Caruana spent a lot of time on this move and the next, but in vain.



47...gxf5 47...g5 48. ♖b5 holds out longer, but the winning plan is quite clear even here: 48... ♖d8 49. ♖a6 ♜c6 50. ♜h3! (50. ♖b7 ♜c7+ is less accurate) 50... ♜d6 (50... ♖g8 51.f6!) 51. ♖b7 ♖e8 52. ♜h1 ♖f7 53. ♖c8, with total zugzwang. Check for yourselves!

48.gxf5 ♖d8



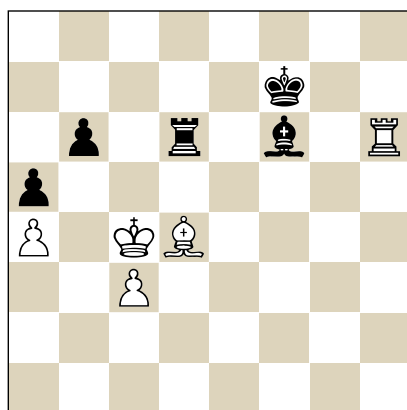
49.f6

I played this immediately, as I had double- and triple-checked the lines so many times already while he was thinking.

49... ♖xf6

49... ♖g6 50. ♜g1+ ♖f7 51. ♜g7+ ♖e8 52. ♜g6 ♖f7 53. ♜xh6, and there is nothing Black can do.

50. ♜xh6

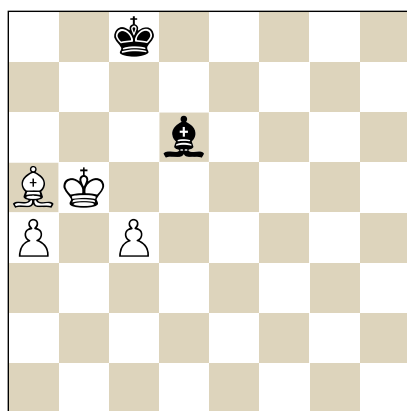


50... ♖e7

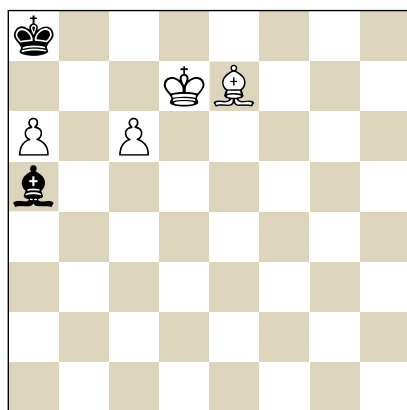
Or 50... ♖e7 51. ♖xf6+ ♜xf6 52. ♜xf6 ♖xf6 53. ♖b5, and wins.

51. ♜xd6 ♖xd6 52. ♖b5 ♖e6 53. ♖xb6 ♖d7 54.c4 ♖c8 55. ♖xa5

It only remains for White not to let Black sac the bishop for the c-pawn. I (and I suspect quite a lot of other people) knew the winning method from the famous game Fischer-Keres, Zurich 1959.



55... ♖b7 56. ♖b4 ♖f4 57.c5 ♖a7 58.c6 ♖b8 59.a5 ♖a7 60. a6 ♖a8 61. ♖c5 ♖b8 62. ♖c4 ♖c7 63. ♖d5 ♖d8 64. ♖e6 ♖c7 65. ♖d7 ♖a5 66. ♖e7



And at this point Black resigned, as 67. ♖d8, followed by 68.c7, is coming up.



NOTES BY

Fabiano Caruana

RL 17.2 – C88

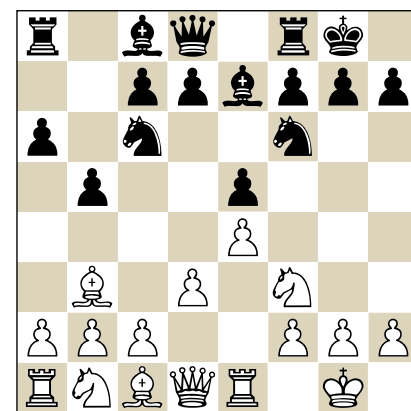
Fabiano Caruana

Levon Aronian

Sao Paulo/Bilbao 2012 (9)

A critical game. I felt I would have to win to keep chances for first place, while for Levon it was the last chance to catch the leaders.

1.e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. ♖b5 a6 4. ♖a4 ♖f6 5.0-0 ♖e7 6. ♜e1 b5 7. ♖b3 0-0 8.d3

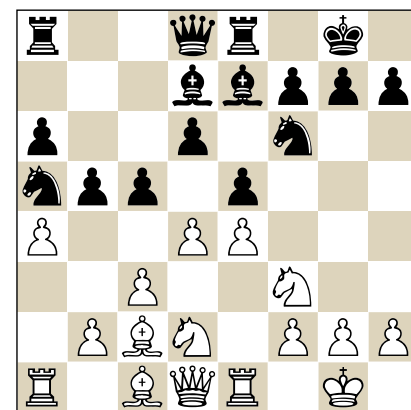


I decided to avoid the dense theory of the Marshall with this forgotten move, which despite its harmless appearance can be surprisingly venomous.

8...d6 9.a4 ♖d7 10.c3 ♖a5 11. ♖c2 c5 12. ♖bd2 ♜e8

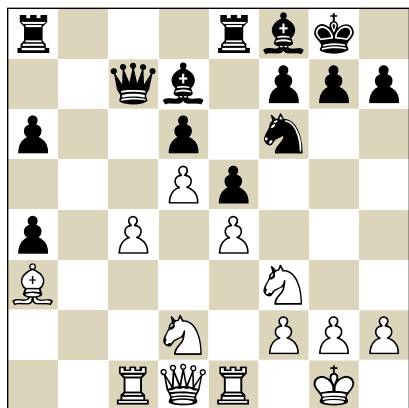
So far we've both been making logical and schematic moves, but here I felt it was time to create some play in the centre. Objectively I should have continued quietly with 13. ♖f1.

13.d4



13...exd4!? Levon shows that he is ready for a sharp fight with this move.

During the game I tried to evaluate the position after 13... ♖f8 14.d5 c4 15. b4 cxb3 16. ♖xb3 ♖c4 17. ♖bd2 (perhaps White can try 17. ♖fd2 ♖b6 18. a5 ♖a4 19.c4, with a messy position) 17... ♖b6 18.a5 ♖a4 19. ♖xa4 ♖xa5 20. ♖a3 bxa4 21.c4 ♖c7 22. ♖c1



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

which I was optimistic about, but the computer disagrees, offering the strong idea of playing ... ♖b8, ...a5 and ... ♖b4.

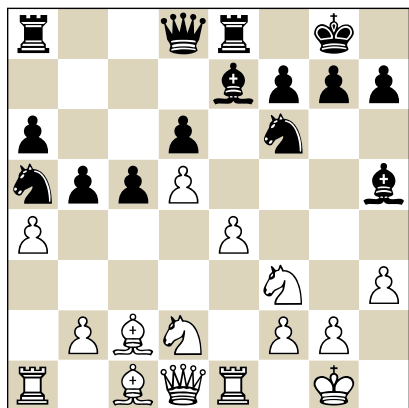
13... ♖c7! was just a clean way to equalize without any problems, indicating that 13.d4 was premature.

14.cxd4 ♖g4

Black's play is very ambitious but also very risky. His bishop is liable to get locked out of the game on g6, so he will have to rely on tactics to keep White from consolidating.

15.h3 ♖h5 16.d5

I didn't like 16.g4 ♖g6 17.d5 ♖f8, because I couldn't see how to remove my knight from d2.



16... ♖c8

A creative idea to solve Black's problems. Levon wanted to prevent g4 by arranging a piece sacrifice. Black also plans the manoeuvre ... ♖d8-b6.



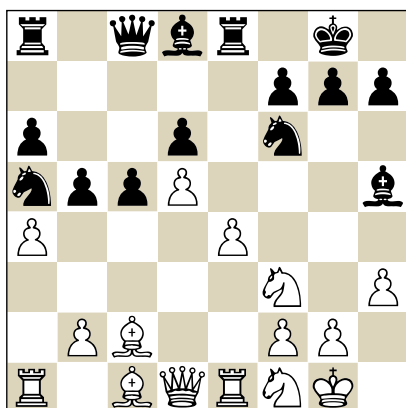
In his race with Magnus Carlsen, Fabiano Caruana had to beat Levon Aronian.

Black could have considered 16... ♖d7 17.g4 ♖g6 18. ♖f1 h6 19. ♖g3 ♖f6, with plans to attack on the queenside with ...b4 and ...c4. White, on the other hand, will continue with ♖g2, h4 and g5. The play is very double-edged but my feeling during the game was that White would be faster.

17. ♖f1

17.g4?! ♖xg4 18.hxg4 ♖xg4+ 19. ♖f1 looks far too risky for White. Black can continue slowly with 19... ♖f6!?, and it's not clear how to free White's pieces.

17... ♖d8

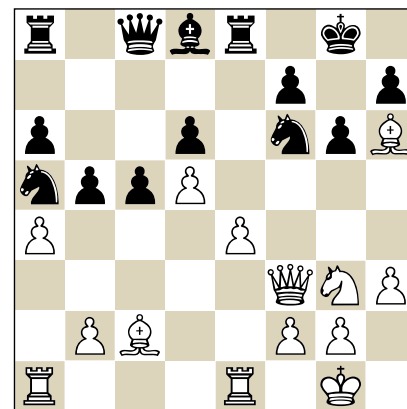


18.g4

I thought I was being clever with this move, but in this case simpler was better.

I should have played 18. ♖g3 ♖xf3 (18... ♖g6 19. ♖f4, with ♖h4-f5 coming next, doesn't look too pleasant for Black) 19. ♖xf3 g6 (19... ♖xd5, and

now, even stronger than 20. ♖f5, I go 20.e5! ♖b4 21.e6! ♖xe6 22. ♖xe6 fxe6 23. ♖h5, with a nasty attack), and now 20. ♖h6



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

is the move I had underestimated, but it's the most natural one, so I don't understand why – 21. ♖f5 next will give White a strong initiative.

18... ♖g6

Now 18... ♖xg4? 19.hxg4 ♖xg4+ 20. ♖g3 is losing for Black, of course.

19. ♖g3 b4

Black is advancing very quickly on the queenside, and it could soon get very dangerous for White if the pawns get to b3 and c3. However, White's superiority on the kingside and in the centre will secure an edge.

20. ♖h4

Not a bad move, but it allows too much of a mess.

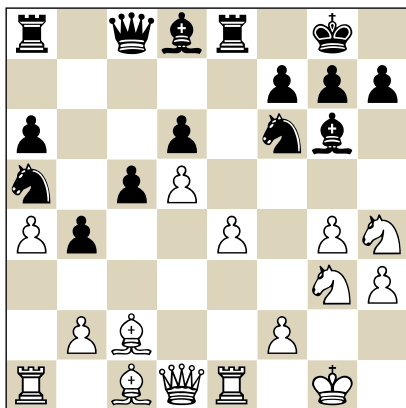
As usual, most natural is best: 20. ♖f4!

Sao Paulo / Bilbao 2012

cat. XXII

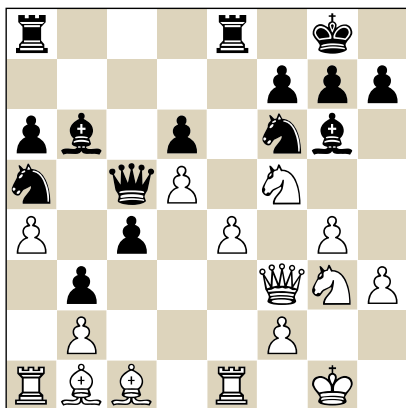
				1	2	3	4	5	6		TPR
1	Fabiano Caruana	IGM	ITA	2773	**	1 0	1/2 1	1 1/2	1/2 1/2	1 1/2	17 2892
2	Magnus Carlsen	IGM	NOR	2843	0 1	**	1/2 1/2	1/2 1/2	1/2 1	1 1	17 2878
3	Levon Aronian	IGM	ARM	2816	1/2 0	1/2 1/2	**	1 1/2	1/2 1/2	1/2 1/2	11 2774
4	Sergey Karjakin	IGM	RUS	2778	0 1/2	1/2 1/2	0 1/2	**	1/2 1/2	1/2 1	10 2745
5	Vishy Anand	IGM	IND	2780	1/2 1/2	1/2 0	1/2 1/2	1/2 1/2	**	1/2 1/2	9 2745
6	Paco Vallejo	IGM	ESP	2697	0 1/2	0 0	1/2 1/2	1/2 0	1/2 1/2	**	6 2649
3 points for a win, 1 for a draw, 0 for a loss											

b3 (20...♔d7 is met by the strong 21. b3! c4 22.bxc4 ♖xc4 23.a5!) 21.♙b1 ♔d7 22.♙d2, and 23.♙c3 next gives White a pleasant advantage.



20...b3 This move prepares the following piece sacrifice. Black had other options as well.

I spent a lot of time calculating 20...c4 21.♖hf5 b3 22.♙b1 ♙b6 (22...c3 23.♖xd6 c2 was also a concern during the game, but White seems to come out on top after 24.♙xc2 bxc2 25.♔d3) 23.♔f3 ♔c5, and here there are many possibilities.

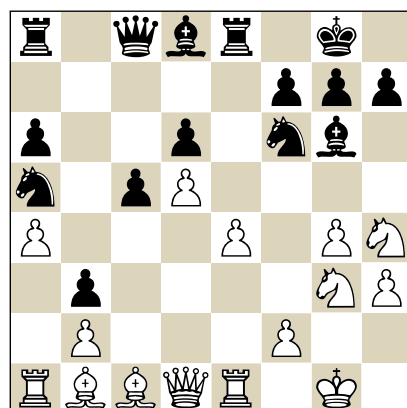


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

One wild continuation is 24.♙f4 c3 25.♙xd6 cxb2 26.♙xc5 bxa1 ♔ 27.♙xb6 ♔xa4 28.♙d4, and despite the material deficit White has a powerful

attack.

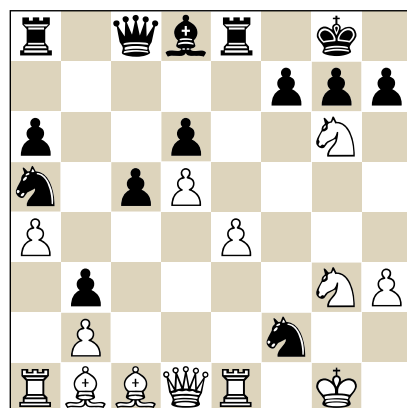
21.♙b1



21...♖xg4!?

A very enterprising piece sacrifice, which is perhaps not fully correct, but leads to unstable and violent positions.

22.♖xg6 ♖xf2



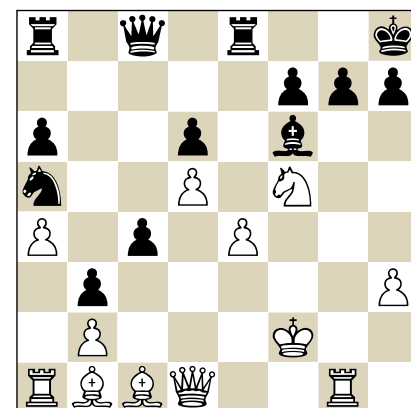
23.♖e7+!

A very important move, without which White would face an unpleasant situation. White has to avoid the structure with pawns on g6 and g7, which cover all the important squares. 23.♖xf2? fxg6! 24.♖g2 ♙f6 doesn't look like a great deal of fun to me. In fact, I can't see how to free White's pieces at all.

23...♔xe7?

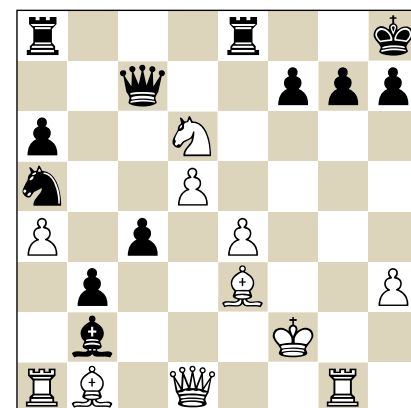
This awkward move is the decisive mistake.

23...♔xe7 is a lot harder to crack: 24.♖xf2 ♙f6 25.♖f5 c4 (Black has to play this as quickly as possible, before White can extricate the bishop with ♙d3) 26.♔g1 (after 26.♖g2 ♙e5 I don't see a clear continuation for White) 26...♖h8



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

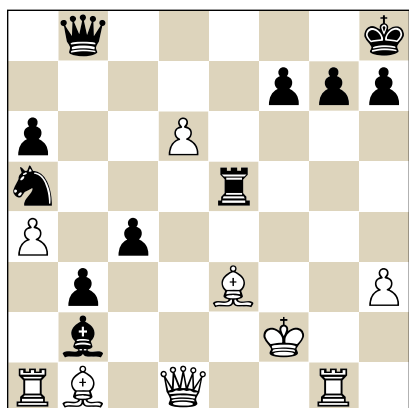
27.♙e3!? (if White wants to stop Black from consolidating, this double-edged move is the way) 27...♙xb2 28.♖xd6 (after 28.♔xg7 ♙xg7 29.♖xg7 ♔xh3! it all ends surprisingly with perpetual check; the position after 28.♙d4 ♙xd4+ 29.♔xd4 ♔c5 30.♔xc5 dxc5 31.♔xg7 is evaluated as good for White by the computer, but I doubt I'd have the guts to go for it) 28...♔c7



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

29.♖xe8 (29.♙d4 ♙xa1 30.♙xa1 c3 31.♔d4 f6 32.♙xc3 ♔xd6 33.♙xa5 might be better for White, but it's more likely that Black will find a perpetual) 29...♔xe8 30.d6 ♔b8! 31.e5! (31.♙d4 ♙xa1 32.♔xg7 – 32.♙xa1 b2 is the point behind 30...♔b8! – 32...♙xd4+ 33.♔xd4 ♖c6 34.♔f6 ♔a7+ 35.♖f1 ♔e6, and Black hangs on by a thread)

31...♖xe5 (31...♙xa1? 32.♖xg7 ♔xg7
33.♖g4+ ♔h8 34.♖f5 mates)

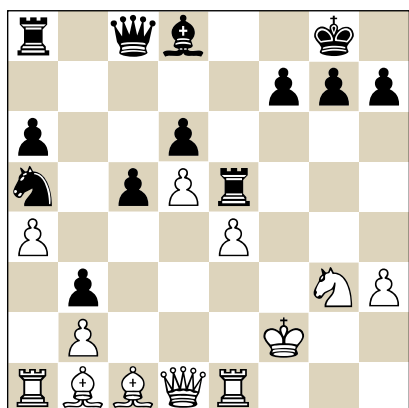


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

32.♖f3!! An astonishing idea, which wins the game for White. The point is 32...♙xa1 33.♖xg7! ♔xg7 34.♙h6+ ♔xh6 35.♖f6+ ♔h5 36.♖xf7+ ♔g5 37.♖g7+ ♔h5 38.♖xh7+ ♔g5 39.♖g6+ ♔f4 40.♖g3 mate. Of course this fantastic play is impossible to discover over the board, with limited time on the clock. In a practical game any result is possible.

24.♙xf2 ♖e5

I understood Levon wanted to sacrifice the rook with 25.♙f4 ♙f6 and achieve a dark-square blockade, but White isn't forced to capture the rook at all.



25.♙g2 25.♙d3 is also very strong.

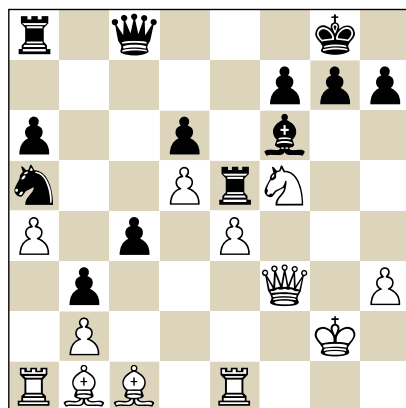
25...c4 26.♙f5

Now the attack starts.

26...♙f6

Levon mentioned 26...♖xf5 27.exf5 ♙f6 as a possibility, but after the simple 28.♖e2 Black has insufficient compensation for the rook.

27.♖f3

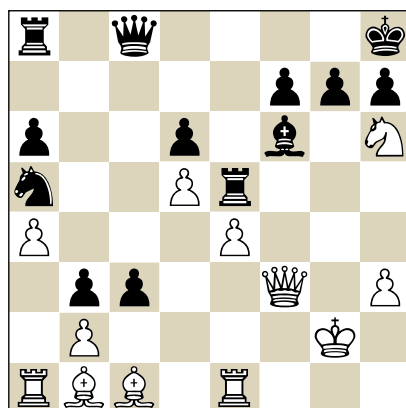


27...c3

After 27...♖xf5 28.♖xf5 ♖xf5 29.exf5 c3 White wins without much difficulty: 30.♖e2 c2 31.♙xc2 bxc2 32.♖a3 ♘c4 33.♖b3 ♖c8 34.♙h1 ♘e5 35.♖xc2, and it's all over.

28.♙h6+ ♙h8

28...♙f8 29.♙d3 is similar to the game.



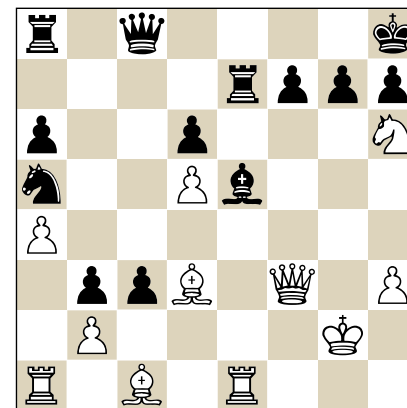
29.♙d3

Maybe even more accurate than taking the pawn on f7.

29...♖e7 30.e5

Of course I was happy to open lines to Black's king.

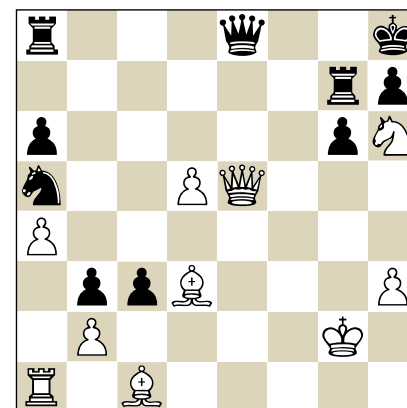
30...♙xe5



31.♖e4 There's many other ways to win as well.

31...g6 32.♖h4 f6 33.♖xe5 dxe5

34.♖xf6+ ♖g7 35.♖xe5 ♖e8



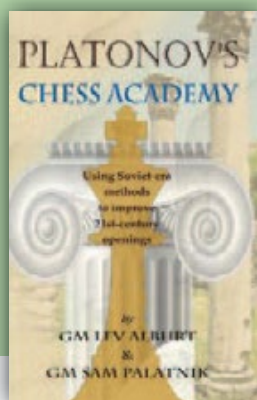
36.♖xc3 ♖c8 37.♖xa5 ♖e7 38.♙g5 ♖e2+ 39.♙g1

Black resigned.

A very important victory, which allowed me to stay in the race for first place. ■

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Interview

In Rolduc, a unique abbey complex in the south of the Netherlands selected on the UNESCO world heritage list, Garry Kasparov received the 2012 Martin Buber Award for his unifying work with young people in Europe. Previous winners of the award include politicians Helmut Schmidt and Mikhail Gorbachov, and actors Karl-Heinz Böhm and Klaus Maria Brandauer. In his eulogy European parliamentarian Daniel Cohn-Bendit praised Kasparov's political acumen and his courage as a member of the opposition in Russian. An apt moment, **Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam** believed, for an interview with Garry Kasparov about his chess foundations, his negotiations with FIDE, his 50th birthday and his plans for the coming years. 'Life must have a purpose, that's what I learned from my mother.'

‘I feel that I am really needed in many places and that makes me feel good.’



As winner of the 2012 Martin Buber Award, Garry Kasparov was presented with a couple of works of art. One of them was a portrait by Peruvian painter Rafael Ramirez, who was happy to shake the laureate's hand.

He would like to spend more time on the ground than in the air. Crisscrossing the world, travelling from one time zone to another, takes its toll on his body. He says he doesn't have a recipe to handle jet lag, as he is *always* suffering from jet lag. But it's not only the dehydration during intercontinental flights and the inevitable lack of sleep – even if you travel as comfortably as he does – that bothers him. 'I wish I could spend my time more effectively,' he says. Then, realizing this sounds like a fairly absurd remark from his mouth, he adds with an apologetic smile: 'I am always complaining.' There is one ray of light, though, his talent for power naps. 'I can sleep literally everywhere, even in a chair in a restaurant.'

Saying that Garry Kasparov is a busy man is asking for misunderstandings. Everyone is 'busy' these days, after all. For him a different word should be invented. We talk around midnight Moscow time via Skype. In Russia, or any European country where he finds himself, he never goes to sleep before 3 a.m. In the US he tends to call it a day between midnight and 2 a.m. As long as he gets at least six hours of sleep he is fine. We met one week ago in Rolduc, in the south of the Netherlands, where he received the Martin Buber Award. The eulogy was spoken by his friend Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the legendary student leader of the revolt in Paris in 1968, who is Co-President of the Euro-

pean Greens-European Free Alliance in the European Parliament these days. In his speech Cohn-Bendit expressed his admiration for Kasparov's fearless role as facilitator in the Russian opposition movement. Without declaring himself politically he wants to bring about a change in his country that will guarantee the democratic rights of any opposition party. The first aim is the freedom of democracy; once this has been achieved the voters may decide whose views they embrace.

The day after the award ceremony, Kasparov left for Russia via a small detour to the Junior World Championship in Maribor, Slovenia. We speak at the end of a weekend that was largely devoted to a meeting of the opposition parties. He will stay in Moscow for five more days and then he is off to Macau, China, where he is to give a speech. Three days later he will be at the other end of the world again for another speech in Washington DC and a further one in New York City the day after. Late at night it's relatively quiet in his study in Moscow. Only twice does he briefly interrupt our conversation to take another call.

The Martin Buber plaque was awarded to you in the first place for your work with young people. The Kasparov Foundation states that its aim is the education of children. You and your people do so by teaching young kids to play chess, but the ultimate goal is the general education of children. How and when did you come to this philosophy?

'I've been an advocate of chess in the schools for more than two decades. Even at the end of the Soviet Union I had the idea of pushing chess in the educational system. Many people believe wrongly that chess was part

of the education in the Soviet Union. On the contrary, it was purely a sports discipline and educational values have never been exercised. In 1988 there was a time of change in the Soviet Union, and one of the ideas was to start using this huge chess experience and to push it into educational areas. I remember I first tried to work with Yury Razuvaev, and many of the future ideas were worked out at that time. We tried it in various places. In Vigo (Spain), in the Colegio Marcote, there was an attempt with a bunch of Soviet coaches that started a programme combined with an academy, trying to have chess lessons in schools. And in the early 1990s these projects started in the United States and elsewhere in Europe.

'Now it comes as a surprise for outsiders that chess in schools is highly popular around the world. The big problem is that it's a very spontaneous development. Some are very successful, like for instance

Leo Battesti in Corsica. Of course you should mention

Armenia, where chess has been integrated in the school system by the government. Georgia. Azerbaijan now, that's where things are done at state level. You have programmes in Turkey, in many European countries, but they are not yet, in my view, designed to maximize the effect for general education. You have Brazil, and especially South Africa, with very sophisticated programmes designed for socially deprived kids. We have enough proof that chess works very effectively both for education and socially. But we never had a centralized entity. Because FIDE, as often happens, spectacularly failed in coming up with one unified, centralized structure to attract global sponsors for the initiative.

'My first successful implementation was in the United States, where we started 10 years ago. We have more

'Many people believe wrongly that chess was part of the education in the Soviet Union.'

than 3,600 schools now working on the blueprint of our organization. In the meantime there are thousands of schools that are doing it separately from us in America. So it's highly popular but totally disorganized. I am not using the word disorganized negatively, but much more could be achieved. In countries like the United States or Germany or Spain, it's impossible to have a state-run programme, because everything is always decided state by state, city by city, municipality by municipality and often even school by school.'

If we may briefly return to the early years, was it a logical step for you to dedicate yourself to teaching and training youngsters after your career, just like you, as a kid, were trained by Botvinnik?

'I always felt that it was for my own good to share information, knowledge and experience. Actually, I started doing it with Botvinnik in 1985, when I won the (world) title. Starting in March '86 for two years we ran sessions with Soviet kids learning from us. We had a spectacular list of players, headed by Kramnik and Shirov.'

If we are looking for essential differences, in Rolduc you said that chess is not a goal, but a means in the educational system.

'I gradually changed my interest in education in general. I believe that with what I call the iPad generation, which I can witness with my six-year-old daughter, I recognize that there are so many challenges, both at the high end and at the low end. We have many problems to tackle and chess helps kids to get adjusted to the modern educational system. We need kids with iPads to find their way in a class room that is still unchanged. Instead of an interactive exchange of information there is one teacher in the class room as the sole source of authority. It's one-way traffic. When we offer computerized versions of our programme, as we

Garry Kasparov at a KCF training session at the Saint Louis Chess Club together with Kayden Troff, the new U-14 Junior World Champion.

did in Georgia, we create a new environment where things can be done differently.

Again, for us chess is not an ultimate end goal, it's just a means. That's why I prefer to use the word chess education rather than chess in schools. It's not just a discipline, like just another physical activity. It's a very important element in the change of the global educational system.'

In the past couple of years your Foundation has grown explosively with new branches around the world. Are all branches essentially doing the same thing or are there regional differences?

'They are not branches, because technically they are not connected. They carry my name, I am the chairman of the board, but they are totally independent charitable organizations. They are based on the laws of the respective countries, the United States, Europe, which is acting under Belgian law, and South Africa. Obviously they exchange information, they are working in sync, but they are totally independent. They have the same goal, but naturally in the US, with 10 years of experience and a lot of money allocated from the sponsors, they are the largest operation. But Europe today is probably the most crit-

ical. Because all the programmes from Convekta, our partner, are signed by KCF Europe. Europe is very much the central point of our activities, because together with the ECU we lobbied for the written declaration (by members of the European Parliament to have chess included in the curriculum), and now we have more countries to follow. Holland looks very promising, hopefully part of Germany, we're also working with France and now we are already having pilot sessions in Estonia. So Europe is the top target for expansion, because we have this written declaration. And of course Slovenia now, we have a letter of intent to open a Kasparov Academy that will be under the auspices of Kasparov Chess Foundation Europe, an academy working for the most talented kids in Europe on a regular basis.'

Indeed, the Kasparov Foundation Europe has been very successful lately, especially by obtaining the support of the European Parliament to get chess accepted as a subject in the curriculum. What is the exact situation right now, what is still needed after you got all these signatures from the members of the European parliament?

'These signatures are all very nice. But that's not where the story ends. You have to lobby in each specific coun-

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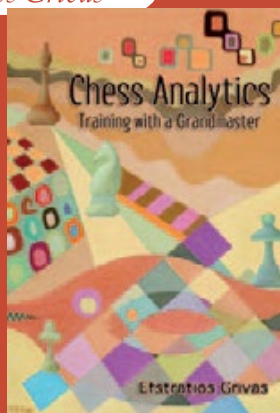


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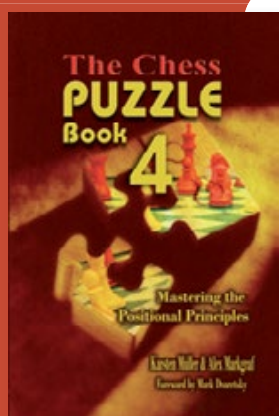
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try or in each specific region. We have a very powerful political weapon. Not only in Europe, also outside Europe we can wave these papers, but at the end of the day it's a local decision. We had 415 signatures, the aim was 378, we could have gotten more but we stopped at one point.'

Do you envision new KCF's in the near future?

'Yes, that's the goal. My goal is to cover the world. The key element of the programme is based on the language platform. We will have a universal playing zone that should be ready next year. That's where we will bring all the kids of all the programmes together and eventually create a world school championship on the Internet.'

What does that mean, the main focus is on the language platform?

'It means that when you have programmes in Georgia, Estonia or Poland it's easy, you go to the Minister of Education if you can open the door, you have a national federation, you sign the contract and in the end you implement it for the whole country or for some regions. You have one source of authority to sign a contract with you. But if you operate in Germany, you can't have one authority for the whole country, so you have to find one place where you can sign the country to operate the German speaking platform, which also includes Austria and Switzerland. A platform that will have all the software in German, that can include the other regions of the country or other countries. The same in France and even more so in Spain. A platform means that in case of major languages, you're not operating from the centre, from the capital. Maybe you find a sponsor. Maybe a cooperation, maybe a region that is willing to host the platform, because you cannot afford to duplicate your efforts in hundreds of different locations.'

You already touched on it, but how is the KCF funded? What's the financial

basis and how do you get your money?

'Which KCF? In America it's private sponsors. We have a contract with the Saint Louis Chess Club on working with American kids. And two of our guys from the KCF program sponsored by the Saint Louis Chess Club now won the Junior World title. Kayden Troff under-14 and Sam Sevian under-12. In Europe we had one major private donation and we are raising money. Basically it's not for us, we are raising money from the respective countries to pay Convekta. This is not money-making, we are guaranteeing the services. In South Africa we have just started. We had a donation from Europe and small local donations, but we haven't started the operation yet.'

There can be no denying that chess in schools is very hot these days. There's your foundation, there is the chess in the schools project in England of Malcolm Pein, there's FIDE's programme. A cynic might say that suddenly a lot of people have discovered that with school chess you can create a highly interesting market where a lot of money will be spent.

'I don't know. So far I concentrate on raising funds and all entities, all KCF's, are strictly charities. They operate under different laws, but all of them are foundations that are not for profit.'

You say that for the moment chess in the schools is still disorganized. Are there plans to cooperate...

'Hopefully one day FIDE will be in a position to help. I think that even through the Kasparov Chess Foundation we can start organizing to get people together. Eventually everyone will move to the computers, we'd like to be ready for this moment. As said, we will be offering a global Internet competition on our playing zone that should be available next year. (Now) we are doing teaching platforms for each country, but in the next six months we will launch a new playing zone. That will be strictly available for schools in

the programme. What I want is a chess Facebook for kids.'

Creating a new market may sound a bit cynical, but you could also say: What's wrong with creating a new chess generation and looking at them as a new market?

'Of course it's a positive idea and of course I like launching products that are related to my name. But it's a long shot, you have to build it, literally, from scratch. For obvious reasons, the global chess market was quite alien to commercial sponsorship. With this FIDE leadership you cannot attract any major corporation. Who wants to be associated with aliens, Assad or Gaddafi?'

You mean that if there is going to be a change of leadership in FIDE in the future, all this can come together?

'Absolutely. I believe that if we can have a decent and respectful leadership of FIDE that is fully recognized as such in the developed world, then it will not be impossible, although it will not be easy, to dream about the Googles or Coca-Colas of this world looking at chess in a much more friendly way. FIDE's budget is something like two million euros a year. FIDE lives from the payments of the major national federations. FIDE has to help to create a commercial environment. These elements were mentioned in Karpov's campaign, but now I have had time to think about it more thoroughly.'

For your ambitions in Europe you closely worked together with Silvio Danailov, the president of the European Chess Union. You were not known to be the closest of friends. Is this a practical pact or have you come closer to each other?

'Silvio has pointed out that we have different political agendas, but it's very important for KCFE to operate in Europe alongside the official organization and FIDE Europe is a very valuable and reliable partner. He needs success and he sees benefits in working

with us. I wouldn't call it a friendly alliance, but there is no animosity either, but our political agenda may be, as Silvio pointed out, different. For me it was very important to demonstrate that our long-term goals are not alien to those of official organizations. And FIDE Europe is part of FIDE. It's not that I am trying to interfere with FIDE and cut them off from any potential benefits, but I just don't want to work with global FIDE because you can't have them as partners in dealing with political and business circles.'

Both you and Danailov are openly critical of FIDE and would like to see the current leadership replaced.

You say that your agendas are different, so there won't be any kind of cooperation on the chess political front?

'No, he said so. It's important to stress that he said that, in an interview in '64'. I never said that and I think it's premature to talk about 2014, but right now I am quite comfortable in cooperating with him and ECU, because I believe it's a very good partnership for KCFE. And we need each other. We would not succeed without the help of the ECU in the European Parliament and vice versa.'

In our previous issue we wrote about the remarkable scene that we witnessed at the FIDE Congress in Istanbul. You held an impassioned speech seated next to Kirsan Ilyumzhinov. Anyone who only sees that photo could believe that the hatchet has been buried and you were friends again. How would you explain to people who only go by that image what really happened?

'Professional chess players don't look at the a4-square and make a judgement of the position. You have to see the whole board. That was a separate

picture as part of a long-term negotiation which started after another long and painful case (at the Court of Arbitration) in Lausanne. FIDE recognized that they had to change the rules to adjust themselves to international laws and obligations. And I wanted to make sure that we have equal positions in the future, that any opposition to Ilyumzhinov will not have to go through the same nightmare as in Khanty-Mansiysk. FIDE basically agreed with most of our proposals. I found the results of the negotiations very positive and if you hear my speech and you listen to my voice, and not only look at the picture, it was clear. I said that the differences are still there and I believe

we have to make FIDE better and stronger. You can do it through conflict or through competing programmes. I believe we can make a better offer. But it's no secret that I am working hard to give FIDE a new leadership in 2014.'

What do you see as the major achievements in Istanbul?

'There are no loopholes left in the rules. There are still some little things left in the proxies procedure, but now at least you can follow them and you can have a decent discussion. Before, in Khanty-Mansiysk, it was just a nightmare, because FIDE was in the position to ignore almost everything. Now they have agreed not to make a level playing field, but it's almost equal.'

Were there other changes in the statutes that you would have liked to see?

'There are some minor things left. I still think that FIDE should stop interfering in the affairs of the national federations. It's a global body and it should not interfere in the business of the national federations, which of course FIDE does now by supporting some local organizations and wreaking havoc in the places where FIDE doesn't

'It's no secret that I am working hard to give FIDE a new leadership in 2014.'

like the local leadership. The changes in the statutes are probably OK, there is some work for the lawyers, but I would like to see, for instance, firm limits for the president. And I am not sure if I like the idea of a ticket. It may not be the end of the world, but maybe people should run separately. But that's fine. I can live with that. There's still time to come up with more precise plans. What's more important is that FIDE must start raising money from global corporations. FIDE must get sponsors to help federations rather than get money out of them.'

How do you see the role of AGON in all this?

'It doesn't bring any money. AGON is an empty shell. I hope I am wrong. I was not happy to see how FIDE handled the AGON contract. I understand that there are some situations where you can get a promise. But if the promise comes from IBM or Deutsche Telekom, that's a different story. If a big promise comes from a company that was registered a couple of weeks before signing the contract with FIDE and it's based in one of the British isles... I mean, it smells, it smells very suspiciously.'

But it's a commitment for many years.

'OK, commitments can be made, but before you actually sign you

have to evaluate the strength of the commitment. The validity of the commitment.'

Taking into account the previous elections, do you think there is a chance to change the leadership in FIDE as long as there is the one-country-one-vote rule and so many delegates are bribed? Is there anything that can be done against this practice?

'They are the rules of the game and the rules have to be respected. Again, if you have general elections in any country, especially in a big country, you will have very different voters. Some of them are rich, some of them are poor. But you can't complain, because that is a fundamental principle of democracy. Yes, I understand there are huge differences, and not just between European federations and others. You have some federations from the developing world where there are people who are really committed to doing something and are ready to work. And there are some small federations that are not interested in anything but being part of the FIDE family. But, you know, that's the current map, you have to work with this map and you have to offer better services. I believe there is a huge potential for change and the winds of history are no longer blowing in Kir-san's sails.'

I still vividly remember the elections in Khanty-Mansiysk, and more specifically a scene in which your lawyer, Ank Santens of White & Case, is staring in disbelief at the stage where the FIDE board is sitting, as she is rudely told that she is not allowed to speak, even though she was promised exactly this at what seemed a fruitful meeting the night before. Why are you more hopeful that the FIDE leadership will keep their word now?

'That's why we have worked hard so that such situations can no longer occur. Every element of the procedure, almost every element, has now been fixed, so that the elections in Tromsø... By the way, you understand the difference between elections in Tromsø and Khanty-Mansiysk. Every element of the congress will be very much protected by the rules. That's what was the greatest achievement in Istanbul and that's what many people didn't understand.'

Which leads to the inevitable question: who does Garry Kasparov have in mind as the new FIDE president? What should his or her profile be like?

'As I said, I made a full commitment to changing the FIDE leadership in 2014. I am working hard to make sure that it will be a very strong team. It's not just a team of six, it should also have



strong connections to the federations. I am now working in different parts of the world. I think sometime next year it will become clear. I keep all options open. If I have to, I will do it myself. It's not yet my top priority, but I am considering it as one of the options if other options will not look as attractive for the voters. We just have to make sure that the voters will like what they see. Because we want change and I believe I have enough support already to move forward. I want to make sure that in 2014 there will be an impeccable ticket that will attract people from Europe and all other continents.'

Would you have time to run yourself? You're so incredibly busy...

'That's why I am saying that my candidacy is not yet top priority. There are a number of reservations. I will have to see what happens and hopefully the next few months will help me to make some key decisions in my life.'

Because it's also connected with your ambitions in Russian politics...

'I would not say ambitions, I'd call it moral involvement. I believe that my role is to help my country to make the transition, to soften the pain that we will suffer from the collapse of the system.'

Suppose you decide to fully dedicate yourself to the FIDE presidency, would it be possible to opt for a background role in Russian politics?

'I don't know. I am not trying to mislead you or your readers. We don't have a calendar. Like in America, where the next presidential elections are in 2016 and you know that Obama is not running. Here in Russia we don't know what will happen, when it will happen and under what conditions it will happen. Putin may stay in power longer, which I doubt very much, or his regime may collapse. That's why unfortunately I have to keep all options alive. In FIDE I know it's 2014 and in Russia you don't know what

Whatever he does, Garry Kasparov's greatest passion remains chess. At the Istanbul Olympiad he intently followed the Russian team.

This April you will turn 50, which still sounds amazingly young for someone who has lived a life as intense as yours. If it wasn't for your energy my estimate would be that you are turning at least 150, going by everything you've already done. How do you keep the motivation and the drive?

'You pushed a very painful button. Turning 50, I am not sure what I want to do on that day, how I am going to celebrate it, whether I want to do that at all. I am very puzzled. I am busier now than ever, I have too many plans. Things happening in Russia, I do more lectures than ever, I have a new book coming, FIDE...'

What do you do to maintain this intense life and stay healthy?

'Look, you know, (hesitates), that's also a good question... I don't know, I'm just trying to be cautious. Some of the events of last August (when he was arrested in Moscow -DJtG) left a mark. I have problems with my elbow now, my right arm. I wish I had more time to look at my health, but I am trying to have a healthy life. You know, I have

will happen in 2014. And of course whatever happens in Russia very much affects other events in my life.'

my mother, I have my wife. Actually I am spending more time with my kids now. My little one, who is at the amazing age of six, my son, who is 16 now, who is in Moscow. I was in Paris with him and I am taking him to America for the Christmas vacation. My eldest daughter is in Columbia University studying political science. I'm trying to get positive energy from my three children.'

You have this burning desire to live every day at least three times.

'Yeah. I am trying to make sure that the day is full. My mother is turning 76 next year and she keeps up because she's busy. Life must have a purpose, that's what I learned from her. That's what I am doing. I have too many focuses, and I want to cut them but it's impossible.'

Travelling to different time zones all the time, working day and night. What makes it worth it?

'You can make the difference if you are required to. I feel that I am really needed in many places and that makes me feel good. Do you remember when I answered the last page questions in New In Chess? Look there. What was my answer to the question what is my greatest fear? I said, it is to become irrelevant.' ■





PORTRAITS: GRANDPRIX.FIDE.COM FRED LUCAS



A trio leads the new Grand Prix

The winners of the inaugural GP in London: Veselin Topalov, Boris Gelfand and Shakhriyar Mamedyarov.

The entrance to Simpson's-in-the-Strand, the venerable landmark restaurant and famous 19th Century chess club.



NEW IN CHESS



Veselin Topalov, Boris Gelfand and Shakhriyar Mamedyarov are the top contenders for the 2012-2013 Grand Prix series, following its inaugural event in London's Simpson's-in-the-Strand. Gelfand and Mamedyarov led the field throughout, each inflicting losses along the way on the rating favourite Hikaru Nakamura, who surprisingly ended in shared last place. [Macauley Peterson](#) reports.



When FIDE announced earlier this year that the rights to the World Championship cycle were being contracted to a brand new company led by an American businessman, it raised more than a few eyebrows. Hadn't the organization of the next Candidates' match been open to a bidding process? Can Grand Prix tournaments really be organized *profitably* in major European capitals? Who is this Andrew Paulson fellow, anyway?

Nine months on, some questions remain, but most chess professionals and fans are crossing their fingers and hoping that this new venture, branded simply 'World Chess', will succeed, with head scratching gradually giving way to cautious optimism.

Paulson has assembled a cadre of London-based professionals and companies to oversee the organization and marketing of the next Candidates' Tournament in March, as well as the current Grand Prix 2012-2013 series, and potentially all World Championship cycle events between now and 2022.

The organization of the *first* Grand Prix tournament, however, was not originally the responsibility of Paulson's team in London. In March, FIDE announced plans to hold the event in Chelyabinsk, Russia. (See Sidebar: 'Best laid plans...')

By July, a disagreement with the Russian Chess Federation – which declined to authorize the tournament – forced Paulson to switch gears and arrange it in Lon-

don. Simpson's-in-the-Strand, the venerable landmark restaurant and famous 19th century chess club and coffee house, provided the backdrop for the event, which took on the characteristics of a private tournament: Elegant decor, few spectators other than invited guests, private bar.

Given the relatively short time-frame, most of the more elaborate presentational innovations, espoused by Paulson for future events, were dropped from the plan and no external sponsors were found. Paulson reports that he personally financed the event at a loss of around \$600,000.

Even so, London has its advantages, and the move allowed Paulson to pursue more mainstream media exposure than would otherwise have been possible. The tournament was the subject of stories from the likes of *The Financial Times* and CNN, and the publicity, he asserts – citing estimates from the tournament's London-based PR firm Mission – was worth far more than the money spent. The hope is that such PR value will redound to the World Chess endeavour as a whole.

Grand but not Grandiose

Some of the new World Chess sensibility was on display in London, such as the refined aesthetic of the tables and partitions, built by design firm Pentagram, whose partners also contributed the brand's *trompe-l'oeil* logo, promotional artwork, and slogan: The Best Mind Wins.

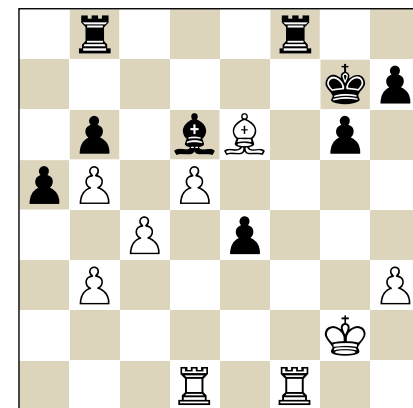
At an elegant party at Somerset House, an arts and cultural centre on the bank of the Thames river, Paulson welcomed the players and a few

hundred invited guests, including ambassadors and celebrities. After a pre-party drawing of lots, the players entertained the crowd by playing blitz, first with each other, then with select guests.

As chance would have it, the pairing Boris Gelfand versus Hikaru Nakamura was the same as would occur in Round 1, the following afternoon, with reversed colours. In the blitz, Nakamura lost a pawn and appeared to be in dire straits positionally, only just barely managing to hold a draw in a bishops of opposite colours ending. The game was for show, and yet it almost proved prescient.

The next day, Gelfand, this time with black against Nakamura, again reached an opposite-coloured bishops ending.

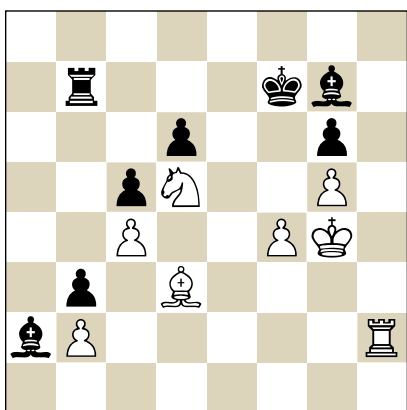
'Paulson reports that he personally financed the event at a loss of around \$600,000 dollars.'



Nakamura-Gelfand
position after 37...e4

Black is slightly better, but White should manage to draw. Nakamura played **38. ♖g4? h5 39. ♖e2 ♜f6 39... ♜f5!** immediately was strong. **40. ♜de1 ♜f5! 41. ♖d1 ♜bf8** Now Black threatens to penetrate with ... ♜g5+ and ... ♜g3, forcing White to exchange rooks on f5, and giving Black connected passed pawns. Gelfand converted the endgame with ease.

Nakamura, who was a favourite to win alongside Vassily Ivanchuk in a pre-tournament ChessVibes.com poll of 442 chess fans, won his second round, but struggled to convert several promising positions in the next three rounds. In the fifth, he even got a lucky escape.



Dominguez-Nakamura
position after 68.♖h2

68...♖b8 69.♖e2 In a winning position, Dominguez missed the crusher: 69.♙xg6+! ♗xg6 70.f5+ ♗f7 71.g6+ ♗f8 72.f6 ♙b1 73.♗g5 and it's lights out for Nakamura. **69...♖b7 70.♖h2 ♖b8** Instead, after repeating once, Dominguez gives his opponent a new lease on life. **71.♘f6? ♖h8 72.♖xh8 ♙xh8** And Nakamura hung on for a draw.

Finally, in the sixth round, the American's luck ran out, and he fell to Wang Hao, the start of a disastrous four-game losing streak.

'Once I failed to draw that game [against Gelfand], and then I didn't win the games in the middle, it all really just spiralled out of control, with the loss to Wang Hao from a better position,' Nakamura said. 'And unfortunately I wasn't really able to get my wits about me until [Round 10] against Anish [Giri]. He and Giri ultimately shared last place, earning €7500 and a measly 15 Grand Prix points apiece.

Nakamura had the most decisive games in London, with two wins and five losses. Despite losing a boatload of rating points, he was surprisingly upbeat when it was all over.

'It's a bad result, but you just have to try and learn from what went wrong and move on, because there's not really much else to do...Sure I went on tilt [*a poker term, describing someone who irrationally lets his bad or improbable luck affect his play – MP*] and I lost four games in a row, but it's not all that bad, because I still got good positions. It's not like throughout the

whole tournament I was worse, and then I had a bad streak and that's the end of the story.'

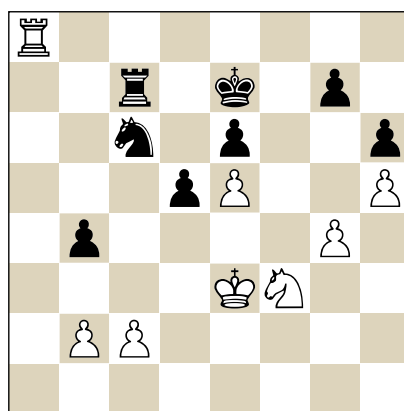
Each player will play four of the six tournaments in the Grand Prix series, and the best three results are counted for the final points total. Having one bad tournament isn't catastrophic, but the fourth score can be used as a tiebreaker.

In search of a 'Cubik Rubik'

Vassily Ivanchuk, the other rating favourite going in, also had a strange tournament. Often to be seen pacing absentmindedly before a game, Ivanchuk seemed even more remote in London than usual. Most players tended to linger in the press room after their games, analysing a bit or chatting with colleagues and guests, but Vassily typically left for the hotel directly, not wishing to be disturbed or give comments.

Fashion statements were another matter, and Ivanchuk alternatively came to the board in an Amsterdam cap, from his summer trip to a tournament outside the Dutch capital, or one from his favourite football club, Chelsea. Once, a purple scarf tucked into his suit jacket pockets represented an even bolder move.

Despite the tactical accoutrement, he suffered an early loss to Peter Leko in Round 2.



Leko-Ivanchuk
position after 32.♘f3

In time pressure Leko had just repeated moves (♘f3-d4, and back) to be closer to move 40 – there was no increment used before move 61 – and

Best laid plans...

When FIDE and Agon Limited signed their 'Promotion and Event Organization Agreement', dated the 20th of February, there was already interest in hosting the first Grand Prix tournament in Chelyabinsk.

According to Agon's Director of Communications, Ilya Merenzon, a local company offered sponsorship funding in the summer of 2011, which he pursued on behalf of FIDE. (He declines to name the company, for fear of exposing them to political problems in Russia.)

Merenzon, a Chelyabinsk native now based in London, was a business associate of Paulson's prior to his interest in World Chess, and introduced Paulson to FIDE officials.

Merenzon and Paulson represent the Agon side of the 'Interface Team', a quartet defined in the contract to resolve contract-related issues. FIDE Executive Director Nigel Freeman and Deputy President Georgios Makropoulos represent the other two members of the 'Interface'.

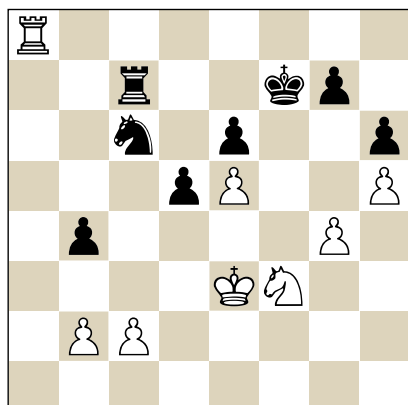
On March 28th, FIDE published a revised calendar of events in the World Championship cycle, officially moving the Candidates' to March, 2013. The change came partly out of deference to the organizers of the Bilbao Masters Final and the London Chess Classic, who worried that the initial schedule of October 23 to November 13 would interfere with their tournaments.

The same calendar included the first Grand Prix in Chelyabinsk, September 19 to October 3. Over the next few months, however, it emerged that Chelyabinsk was not a viable option after all.

There was never any written agreement between the local sponsor and FIDE, according to Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Borg, who said the offer came from the Chelyabinsk Chess Federation. Meren-

therefore, Leko says, Ivanchuk ‘made instantly an impulsive move – ♔f7 – which lost immediately.’

32...♔f7?



33.g5

‘Already this g5 idea I had calculated like half an hour before, because there were many times these lines when... the motif was still the same with g5. And suddenly Black can resign immediately. I think it was a very sad moment for Vassily.’

White threatens g6+ and ♖g8, winning the g7-pawn.

33...hxg5 34.♗xg5+ ♕e7 35.♖g8 ♗xe5 36.♖xg7+ ♕d6 37.♖xc7

The e6-pawn falls as well, and White’s h-pawn decides the game.

37...♕xc7 38.♗xe6+ ♕d6 39.♗f4 ♕c6 40.♗d3 ♗g4+ 41.♕f4 ♗f6 42.♗g5 Black resigned.

The Hungarian grandmaster hasn’t won a tournament since the 2008 Sparkassen Chess Meeting in Dortmund, and this was his only win in London, with ten draws.

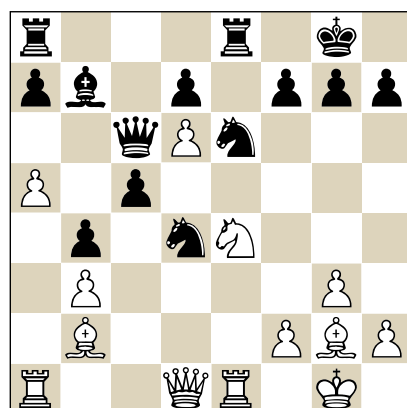
After the fourth round, Ivanchuk wanted to forget about his draw with Giri, and instead was on a search for an oversized five-by-five Rubik’s Cube. He visited three shops in nearby Covent Garden but came up empty handed.

The next days he played short but interesting draws both with Alexander Grischuk and Boris Gelfand, each less than 25 moves before a repetition appeared. The tournament rules prohibited agreed draws, and players were expected to consult the arbiter in the case of a move repetition.



Andrew Paulson seems to be pleased as he inspects the winners of his first Grand Prix.

In the final position against Gelfand there was quite an interesting possible continuation, which the players discussed afterwards.

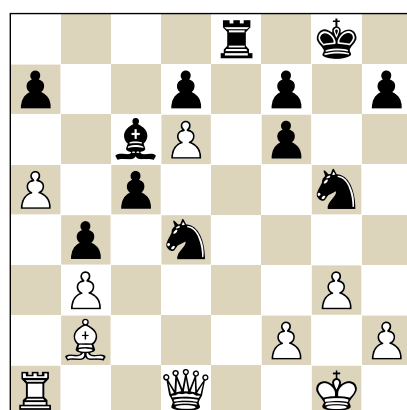


Gelfand-Ivanchuk

final position, after 25.♗g2

Black can offer a temporary queen sacrifice by playing:

25...♗g5 26.♗f6+ gxf6 27.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 28.♗xc6 ♗xc6



ANAYSIS DIAGRAM

29.♗xd4 Black’s minor pieces are extremely dangerous, and White is

forced to take the knight. If, for instance, 29.♕f1 ♗f3 30.♖b1 ♗e4, the queen has no escape: 31.♖d3 (31. ♗c1 ♗c3 32.♖b2 ♖e2) 31...♗e2+; 29.f4 ♗df3+ 30.♕f2 (30.♕f1 ♗xh2+ 31.♕g1 ♗gf3+ 32.♕g2 ♗g4) 30... ♗h3+ 31.♕g2 ♗fg1+ 32.♕f1 ♗f3 33.♖d2 ♖e2, and again White must give up the queen. **29...♗f3+** And White’s best option is **30.♖xf3** 30.♕g2 ♗xd4+ 31.♕f1 ♗f3 32.♖b1 ♗e4 is also balanced. **30...♗xf3 31. ♗xc5 a6** With a likely draw.

‘It looks like a draw anyway, so I don’t think there are significant winning chances for me’, Ivanchuk said after the game. Gelfand thought that it would be even dangerous for Black.

Ivanchuk was upbeat, and smiling broadly, as he prepared to leave Simpson’s. ‘I think my games in this tournament [are] quite interesting, so many interesting ideas, so I am optimistic. There are six rounds more? No, five. OK, I am still fighting, thank you.’

In Round 7, however, Vassily was demonstrably addled. He played the first few moves against Rustam Kasimdzhanov without touching his scoresheet. Then he couldn’t find his pen, and requested one from International Arbiter Carol Jarecki, but before she could comply he discovered his own pen in an inside jacket pocket, much to his apparent surprise. More

surprising was what happened on the board, as the players began repeating as early as move eight!

Kasimdzhanov was recovering from a bad loss to Mamedyarov the day before. 'After that, my main objective was basically to come back to my senses,' Rustam explained. 'I thought my opponent today would try to use the condition I was in to kind of knock me out, because he was White and he's also, well, a stronger player.'

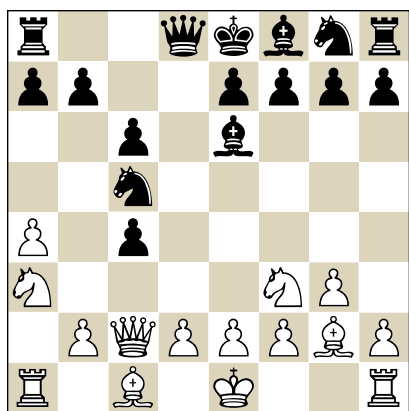
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Vassily Ivanchuk

Rustam Kasimdzhanov

London 2012 (7)

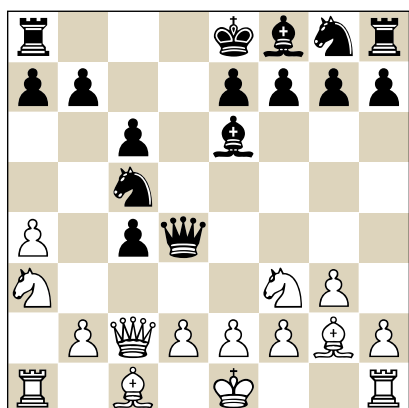
1.c4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.g3 dxc4 4.♙g2
♘d7 5.a4 ♘c5 6.♘a3 ♙e6 7.♙c2



7...♙d5 'I defended my pawn twice, and then he started repeating moves, which I never expected from him.'

7...♘b3 would have even given Kasimdzhanov the advantage, e.g. 8. ♖b1 ♙d5 9. ♙c3 (now after 9. ♘h4 the queen has the c5-square: 9...♙c5 followed by 10...♖d8, with a clear edge to Black) 9...♖d8.

8.♘h4 ♙d4 9.♘f3



9...♙d5

'I looked for a way to avoid the repetition but didn't find anything comfortable,' Kasimdzhanov insisted.

After 9...♙e4 10. ♙xe4 ♘xe4 11. ♘e5, 'I thought I have chances to be worse very quickly, because c4 and c6 are hanging, and then suddenly he gets a pleasant endgame. Because if I lose a pawn for nothing, somehow my whole strategy doesn't make sense.' It's easy to second guess with the aid of a computer, but while the position is sharp, it's unlikely Black could be worse, e.g. 11...♘c5 12. ♘xc6 (12.b4!? cxb3 13. ♘xc6 ♘f6 14. ♘b5 ♙d5 15. ♘c7+ ♙d7 16. ♘xd5 bxc6) 12...♘b3! 13. ♖b1 ♙f5.

10.♘h4 ♙d4 11.♘f3

Draw.

Ivanchuk quickly left the playing hall, forgetting even to sign his scoresheet. Jarecki had to phone him in his hotel room to return and give his signature.

Kasimdzhanov defended the result, arguing that it lays bare the fallacy of a reliance on the Sofia-Corsica rule to discourage short draws.

'You can apply the Sofia rules all you like, the percentage of draws will only rise...because people will use every opportunity to repeat moves because they think, "OK, when will I get to repeat moves again?" – if you know what I mean.'

He has advocated a radical approach that draws should immediately be replayed with reversed colours at rapid time controls, until a decisive result is reached.

'If a draw was replayed, then I would probably leave today with a more satisfied feeling of a guy who actually played a game of chess, and not some freak occurrence like this.'

Curious how other players viewed this unusual result, I asked Boris Gelfand for his take on the game: 'I sense that Vassily mishandled the move order in the opening, and then he had the choice either to play without a pawn with no real compensation, or to force a draw. So he forced a draw...

zon describes the proposed sponsorship as a 'written commitment, not a contract, a protocol'.

At the FIDE General Assembly in Istanbul, where the contract with Agon was ratified, Ilya Levitov, Chairman of the Board of the Russian Chess Federation, asked pointed questions regarding the sponsorship of the Grand Prix. He insisted that the Governor of the Chelyabinsk province, Mikhail Yurevich, was unaware of any plans.

When asked about Levitov's statement to the General Assembly, Borg responded by e-mail that 'Levitov claimed ignorance, but there were many people involved'. Merenzon points out that the proposed sponsor was a company not directly connected with the governor.

It remains unclear who exactly was behind the idea of holding a tournament in Chelyabinsk, and why. What is clear is that the RCF pressured the political leadership there not even to consider holding the tournament without the explicit approval of the national federation, underscoring ongoing tensions between the RCF and FIDE as a result of the deal with Paulson. Levitov has been a vocal critic of FIDE's decision from the outset.

The RCF then told Paulson that they would only authorize the tournament if three of the six 'wild card' spots were given to Russian players. One was already going to Alexander Morozovich, and three other players had qualified (Alexander Grischuk, Sergey Karjakin and Peter Svidler), but the RCF insisted on two more.

'I don't like being bullied, so we pushed for an unconditional permission, which was not forthcoming', Paulson explained by e-mail.

Without RCF approval, any potential sponsorship money was moot. Therefore, with Chelyabinsk unable to host the tournament, Paulson and FIDE made the decision to move the event to London, while keeping the announced dates.

For future events, FIDE is to receive a deposit from Agon for €500,000, within 60 days following the ratification of the contract. That deadline came and went on November 6th. At press time, FIDE had not yet received the funds, although they expect the delay will be temporary.

Faszination Blindschach

Raj Tischbierek (Hrsg.)



Schauspiel des Geistes

Marc Langs unglaublicher Rekord
im Blindsimultanschach

Exzelsior Verlag

Der deutsche FIDE-Meister Marc Lang schraubte am 26. November 2011 den Weltrekord im Blindsimultan auf sagenhafte 46 Bretter! Er überbot damit die bisherige Bestmarke von Miguel Najdorf, die 64 Jahre Bestand hatte.

Marc Lang gibt Einblick in seine Vorbereitung auf und in seine Gedankenwelt während des Weltrekordes. Anschließend entwirft Schach-Historiker Dr. Michael Negele einen ausführlichen Abriss der Geschichte des Blindschachs seit den ersten Erwähnungen im Jahre 1266.

Erbältlich im
Exzelsior Verlag (Berlin)
Tel: 0049-30-61076285
Email: info@exzelsior.de

200 Seiten, kartoniert, 23,80 Euro
ISBN 978-3-935800-07-5

‘Of course I do believe it’s very painful to agree a draw so early, nobody enjoys it, but we are all professional players, so to play a pawn down and then fighting another six hours to make the same draw, I don’t think it’s a better option.’

Gelfand agrees that the Sofia-Cor-sica rule is no solution. ‘A lot of these ideas are built under wrong presumptions which officials have that chess players are lazy bastards whose whole idea is to deceive [the] public and to make short draws and go home. It’s not true. It’s a lie. We see that all the chess players are very motivated people and if you want to go to the very top you have to be motivated, otherwise you have no chance to be on top.’ (He dislikes Kasimdzhanov’s proposal, however.)

No Motivation

Further up the standings, Alexander Grischuk says he arrived in London ‘without any hopes, without any motivation, without anything, but still I think I played quite OK, not that bad’. He would have preferred to play in the second event in the series, Tashkent, but had already requested to skip the Lisbon tournament, scheduled for just ten days after the Candidates’, and other players had conflicts with London. (See Sidebar: ‘A field in flux.’)

Grischuk was undefeated with two wins, and finished in clear fourth place, netting 90 Grand Prix points, and a €17,500 prize.

Grischuk’s two wins came against two of the winners, Mamedyarov and Gelfand. He was nevertheless far from satisfied.

‘Of course it’s not comparable to the Olympiad, when I was *extremely* upset, but still, the day when I will consider such result to be a success is the day I should stop playing.’

In the ninth round, Grischuk’s defeat of Gelfand injected some additional drama into the final rounds, as he moved into a tie for second with Gelfand and Topalov, trailing Mamedyarov by just half a point.



NOTES BY

Alexander Grischuk

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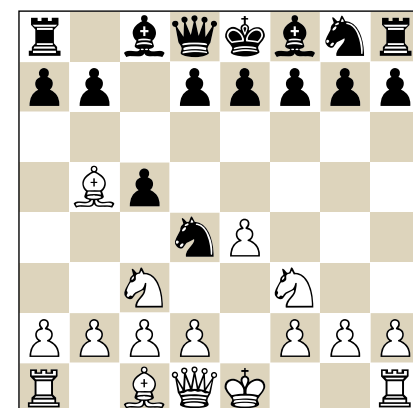
Alexander Grischuk

Boris Gelfand

London 2012 (9)

With three rounds to go Boris Gelfand was confidently leading the tournament, showing great chess. Yet I was not scared enough not to try to win.

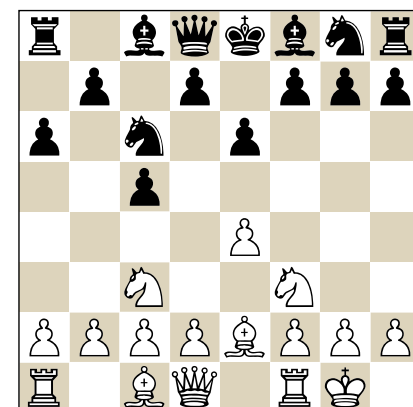
1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 ♘d4 4.♘f3



Yury Sergeevich Balashov played this variation several times in the ’90s, but it never became really popular. It leads to very original positions in most lines, which is perfect for a player in a must-win situation.

4...e6 Boris repeats his recent game against Vallejo. Obviously Black has a lot of other options as well.

5.0-0 a6 6.♙d3 ♘c6 In the game mentioned above Boris chose 6...♘e7. 7.♙e2

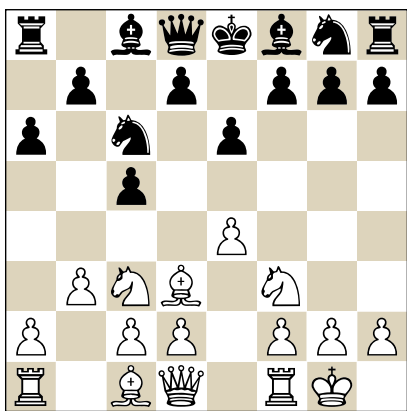


7...♘d4! This move I had missed in my preparation. 7...♙c7 8.d4 cxd4 9.♘xd4 ♘f6 leads to the Paulsen, and

7...d6 8.d4 cxd4 9.♘xd4 ♘f6 to the Scheveningen.

8.♙d3 Here I could get a great version of the reversed Simon Williams Dutch with 8.♘xd4 cxd4 9.♘b1 ♘e7 10.d3 ♘c6 11.♘d2 d6 12.f4 g6 13.♘f3 ♙g7 14.♚e1 0-0 15.♙d2, but a reversed Dutch, even in the greatest of versions, is not something White usually dreams about.

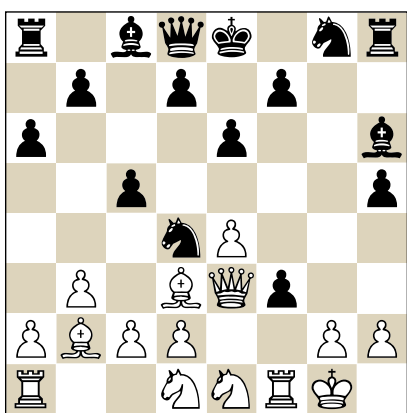
8...♘c6 9.b3!



9...d6

The position is almost as complex as the starting one, so it would be stupid to try to comment on it seriously. I will just give some amusing lines.

After 9...g5 10.♙b2 ♙g7 the computer likes the absolutely bizarre 11.♚e2 g4 12.♘e1 h5 13.♘d1 ♘d4 14.♚e3 and, if Black continues 'logically' with 14...♙h6 15.f4 gxf3



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

he can pretty much resign after 16.♚f2!.

Another logical set-up, 9...♘ge7 10.♙b2 ♘g6, can be met with 11.♘d5 d6 12.♚e1! (12.♘e3 ♘f4) 12...exd5 13.exd5+ ♘ce7 14.c4. We will see a similar position a little bit further on.

10.♙b2 ♘f6

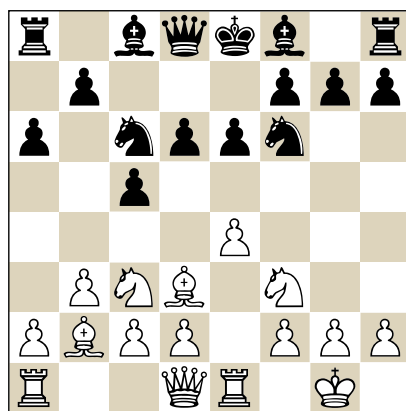


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Alexander Grischuk said that he arrived in London 'without any hopes, without any motivation, without anything, but still I think I played quite OK, not that bad.'

In case of 10...♙e7 11.♚e1 ♙f6 the computer is ecstatic about 12.e5 ♘xe5 13.♘xe5 ♙xe5 14.♚xe5 dxe5 15.♚h5, at first promising White a huge advantage, but after 15...♘e7! (15...♘f6 16.♚xe5 ♚d4 – 16...0-0 17.♘e4 – 17.♚g5 ♙d7 18.♘d1 ♚d5 19.♚xg7 ♚g8 20.♘e3!) 16.♚xe5 0-0 it slowly but surely loses its optimism. White definitely has enough compensation, but probably no more.

11.♚e1

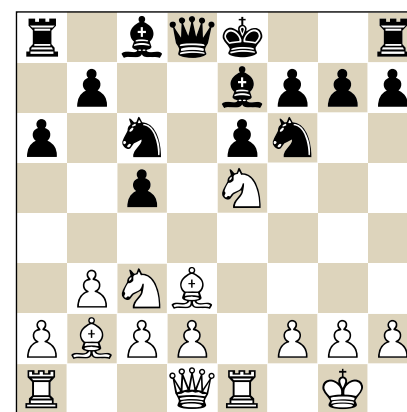


11...♙e7

People sometimes complain that there are fewer 'brilliant' sacrifices than there used to be in the past. However, the point is that players just don't allow them anymore! For example I was going to meet 11...♚c7 with 12.♘d5! exd5 13.exd5+ ♘e7 14.c4, and the position is great in the sense that the one who plays better will win. This is what chess is supposed to be about!

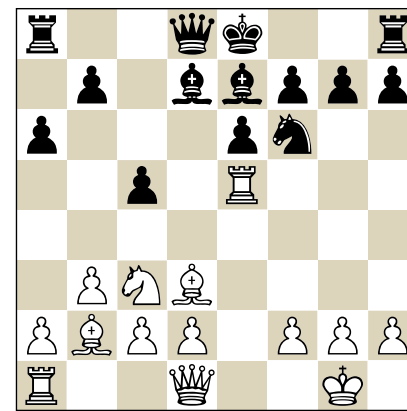
After the text-move, and even more so after the super-solid 11...e5, the game is way more prosaic.

12.e5 dxe5 13.♘xe5



13...♙d7?!

I could not really criticize any of Black's moves prior to this point, but this one is a serious inaccuracy. After the correct 13...♘xe5 14.♚xe5 ♙d7 Black is extremely close to equalizing. Here are the lines:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

– 15. ♖e4 ♗c6! 16. ♖xc5 ♗d6!
17. ♗e2 (17. ♖xe6 fxe6 18. ♗xe6+
♔d7 19. ♗f5 ♔c7 20. c4 ♗e8) 17...
♗xe5 18. ♗xe5 ♗d5.

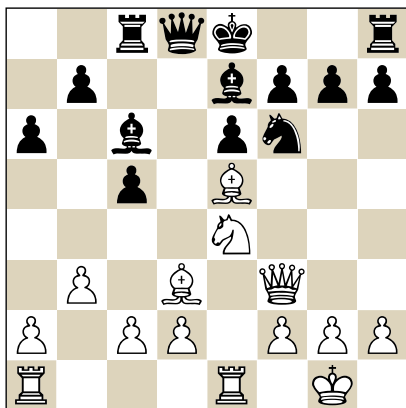
– 15. ♗g5 g6 16. ♗g3 0-0 17. ♗e2 ♗c6.

14. ♖e4

Now White grabs the initiative.

14... ♖xe5 15. ♗xe5 ♗c6 16. ♗f3 ♗c8

16...0-0 loses a pawn: 17. ♗xf6
♗xf6 18. ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 19. ♗h5, and
although Black gets very reason-
able drawing chances after 19...g6
20. ♗xc5 ♗fd8, no one would go for
this voluntarily.

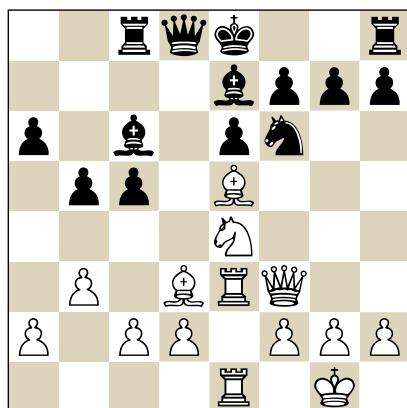


17. ♗e3! b5

Black cannot really hope to castle
safely, so 17...h5 was probably best,
but anyway, after 18. ♗ae1 ♖f8 19. h3
♗h6 20. ♗e2 White keeps very annoy-
ing pressure.

17... ♖d5 doesn't work because of
18. ♗g3.

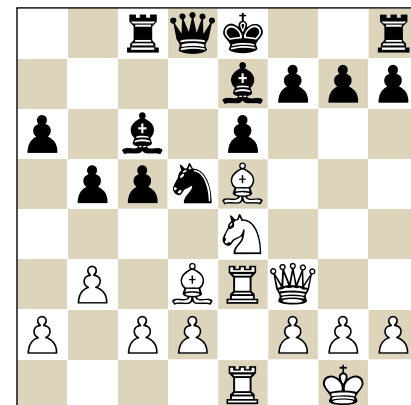
18. ♗ae1 18.c4 was also possible, but
it just looks too ugly.



18...c4?!

This move is connected with a blun-
der, but it is hard to really criticize it.
Objectively, Black should have tried

18... ♖d5, but this move is very risky.
I failed to find a win for White. Here
are some lines:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 19. ♗g4!? c4 (19... ♖xe3? gives
White good chances: 20. ♗xg7 ♗f8 21.
♖f6+ ♗xf6 22. ♗xf6) 20. bxc4 bxc4 21.
♗g3!? cxd3 22. c4 ♖b6 (22... ♖f6? loses
to 23. ♗xg7 ♖xe4 24. ♗xh8+ ♔d7 25.
♗xd3+) 23. ♗xg7 ♗f8 24. ♖f6+ ♗xf6
25. ♗xf6 ♗d6 26. ♗xh7 ♖xc4 27.
♗g7 ♔d7 28. ♗xf8 ♗xf8 29. ♗xd3+
♗d5 30. ♗d4, and White is clearly
better, but Black has counter-chances;



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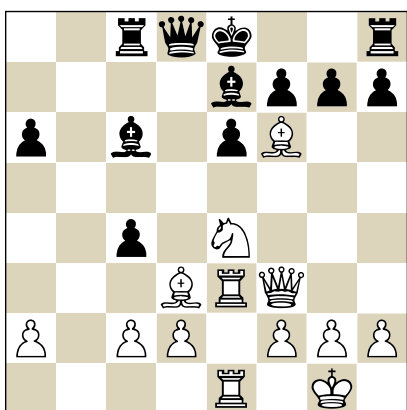
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B) 19. ♖g3 c4! 20. bxc4 (20. ♖f3 cxd3 21. ♖xf7 ♘f6 22. ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 23. ♘d6+ ♘d8 is fine for Black) 20... bxc4 21. ♖f3 (21. ♖xg7 ♖f8) 21... cxd3 22. c4 (22. ♖xf7 ♘xf7 23. ♖xg7+ ♘e8 24. ♖xh8+ ♘d7 25. ♖xh7 ♘b5 is about equal) 22... f5 23. ♘d6+ ♘xd6 24. ♘xd6 ♘f7 25. cxd5 ♘xd5 26. ♘e5 ♖g8 27. ♖xd3 h6, and White is only marginally better;

C) 19. ♖3e2!? is an easy way to keep the pressure: 19... 0-0 20. ♖h3 h6 21. ♖g4.

19. bxc4 bxc4 20. ♘xf6



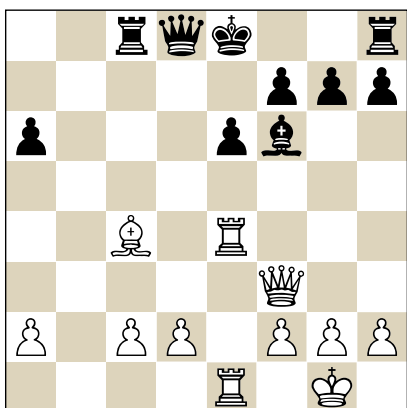
20... ♘xe4!

Boris had probably missed that after 20... gxf6 21. ♘xc4 f5 White has 22. ♖h5, with a huge advantage: 22... fxe4 23. ♘xe6 ♖f8 24. ♘f5 ♖c7 25. ♘xe4 ♘xe4 26. ♖xe4 ♖xd2 27. g3, and the attack will never stop.

21. ♖xe4

Obviously it would be desirable to play 21. ♖xe4, but then Black has 21... gxf6! 22. ♘xc4 f5, when 23. ♖e5 ♘f6 24. ♖f4 won't work because of 24... ♖d4.

21... ♘xf6 22. ♘xc4



22... ♖xd2??

A very strange mistake, taking into

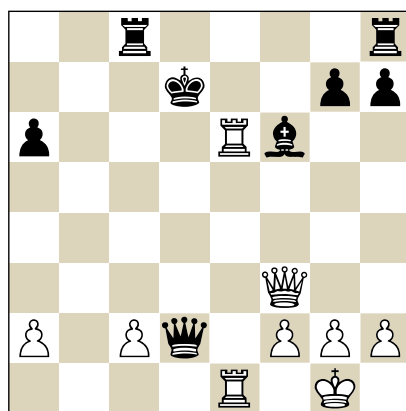
account that after the subsequent 23. ♘xe6 (but not 23. d3, since Black's bishop will feel too comfortable on the dark squares), White wins in many ways. After the normal 22... 0-0 23. ♖1e2 Black will face a long and difficult defence, but I would evaluate his chances to survive as 60-40.

23. ♘xe6 fxe6 24. ♖xe6+ ♘d7

Other moves lose quickly as well:

– 24... ♘f7 25. ♖h5+! (but even 25. ♖b7+ ♘g6 26. ♖e4+ ♘h6 – 26... ♘f7 27. ♖e7+ – 27. h4 is very dangerous for Black) 25... g6 26. ♖f3 ♖c3 27. ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 28. ♖b7+;

– While after 24... ♘f8 White can mate in 13 with 25. ♖xf6+ (but 25. h4 or 25. g3 are also good enough) 25... gxf6 26. ♖xf6+ ♘g8 27. ♖e6+ ♘g7 28. ♖g4+ ♘f7 29. ♖f5+ ♘g8 (29... ♘g7 30. ♖e7+) 30. ♖xc8+, and mate in 7 more moves.



25. ♖g4!

The last accurate move.

25... ♘c7 26. ♖c4+ ♘d7 27. ♖a4+ ♘d8 28. ♖xa6 ♘d7 29. ♖b5+ ♘d8 30. ♖e8+

Black resigned.

This game was played after the rest day, and I spent about 10 hours preparing for it. But the victory itself came quite easily. As the great Russian commander Alexander Suvorov used to say: 'The more you sweat in training, the less you bleed in war.'

Gelfand felt that he had overestimated his position. '22... ♖xd2 was a miscalculation, because I understand that if I don't take on d2 I'm a pawn down, but like 50/50 chances to save the game, but I thought that I could take it, and I

missed one finesse in calculation. So it just can be called a blunder. I thought that I could play ... ♘f8... and unfortunately I was already pretty short of time, so I couldn't double-check it.'

After losing his World Championship match, Gelfand took some well-earned vacation time with family to recover physically and mentally, and says the psychological toll was harder to overcome. 'The stress was big, and physically after each tournament I'm very tired, but still, I know that with time I get energy back, and here it was the case also.' At the same time, he says, he had 'so many positive emotions while preparing for the match and playing the match – you know you did something that you enjoy so much – so it really helped.'

Gelfand is automatically seeded into the next Candidates' tournament in March, so this Grand Prix series is laying the groundwork for an eventual run at a planned 2015 title match, in case he fails to win sooner.

The small details

Topalov, for the first time in a while, is back at the beginning of a qualification run. Although he is a reserve player for the March Candidates, it is unlikely he will get a spot.

'I was never so low in the cycle. So for me it's strange. But still it's good that not only I shared first place, but somehow I could play solidly, didn't make many big blunders, as during the Olympiad or during my previous events – in Wijk it was terrible, for example.'

In London Topalov focused on improving his concentration, screening out distractions. He travelled to London alone, preferring to work with seconds only via the Internet. Once distinguished for his theoretical novelties, now it's the small details like nerves, and stamina in key moments that account for the difference between the elite players in a tournament, according to Topalov – even more so than opening preparation.

‘Everybody pushes the same button – the computer is looking at the same lines and you cannot really make a big difference, and so it’s about the moment.’

Once such moment came in the sixth round. Topalov was badly in need of a win, and got little out of the opening against Leinier Dominguez Perez, but the Cuban opened a window into his closed position, and Topalov dove through it.

Topalov was rather surprised to find himself in shared first place at the end of the eleventh round, when he beat a struggling Anish Giri.

‘After the opening, at some point [chuckles], I saw my position, I saw Mamedyarov’s position and I congratulated him with the win – during the game – because it was obvious – almost clear he was going to make a draw, and I just couldn’t see what could happen in my game as well... I thought that I was going to have a quick draw, and so did he. But OK, it happens. You know, sometimes you’re lucky in life.’



NOTES BY
Veselin Topalov

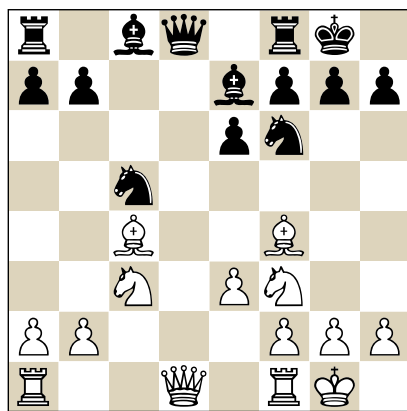
QO 1.5 – D37
Anish Giri
Veselin Topalov
London 2012 (11)

Before the last round Mame (Mamedyarov – ed.) was leading, and there were three guys half a point behind him: Gelfand and Grischuk, who were both playing with white, and me playing with black against Giri. The situation was quite unclear, but I didn’t believe I had real chances to be the final winner. Since we were playing two hours earlier than in the previous rounds, I decided to play solidly instead of going for a sharp opening. One of the reasons was that it’s a Grand Prix, consisting of six events, and this was only the first one. So I

didn’t really care if I was on plus-2 or plus-3, and didn’t object to a draw.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♙e7 5.♙f4 0-0 6.e3 ♘bd7 7.♙e2 dxc4 8.0-0 c5 9.dxc5 ♘xc5 10.♙xc4

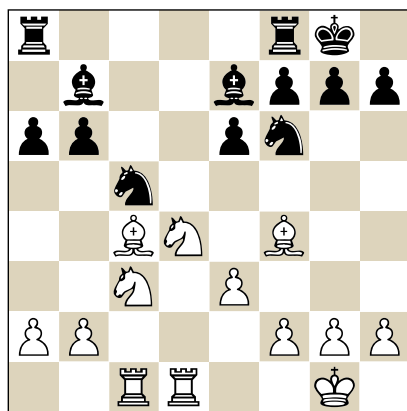
We quickly played through the same opening line that Gelfand chose against me in the second round and against Kasimdzhanov at the Olympiad.



10...♙xc4

Against Kasimdzhanov I went 10...♙d7 and lost quickly, but against Gelfand I improved. It’s a pretty harmless line, but in that game, too, I was in trouble at some point, because I had forgotten what my second had told me.

11.♙fxd1 b6 12.♘d4 ♙b7 13.♙ac1 a6

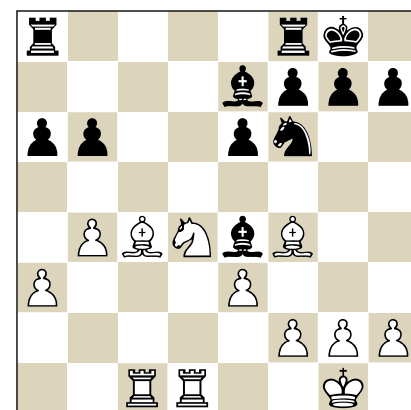


14.b4

The other move is 14.f3, when Black plays 14...♙ac8.

However, if White wants to achieve something he has to chase away the knight.

14...♘ce4 15.♘xe4 ♙xe4 16.a3
White can also play 16.f3 here, but this doesn’t make too much difference.



16...a5 Against Gelfand I played 16...♙fc8, and later on committed an inaccuracy. After the game I reread the email that my second had sent me before the game and saw that he had told me that I should play 16...a5, which is not only a novelty, but also the first move the computer shows. The move opens up the a-file, which means that the plan of f3 and e4 that Gelfand used would no longer be so effective. My bishop was pushed back to b7, where it was not well placed, whereas now I would have had time to exchange it.

17.f3 ♙d5 18.e4 ♙xc4 19.♙xc4
Now I open up the a-file.

19...axb4 20.axb4

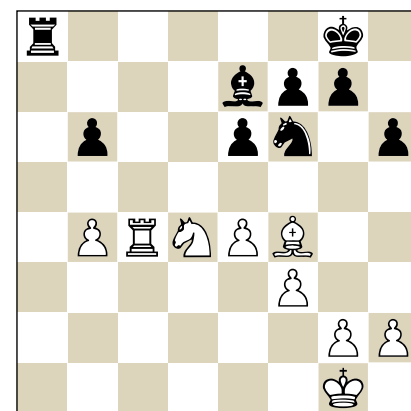
And I also exchange one pair of rooks.

20...♙fc8 21.♙dc1

Here 21.♘c6 doesn’t work, because I can just take the pawn: 21...♙xb4, and I am utterly fine.

21...♙xc4 22.♙xc4 h6

For some reason I played this move. Perhaps it would have been better to go 22...♙f8 immediately.



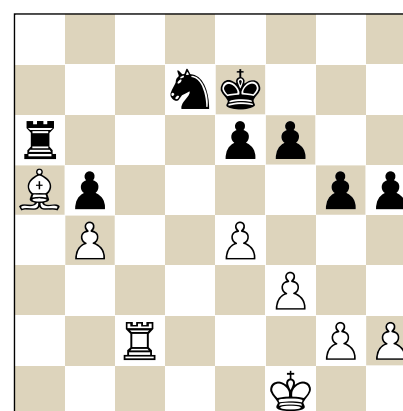
23.♙f1

If he goes 23.♘c6 immediately, I will start checking with my rook and it will be a draw immediately. So far



Veselin Topalov explains his game to a fellow Bulgarian, on the service staff at Simpson's.

MACAULEY PETERSON



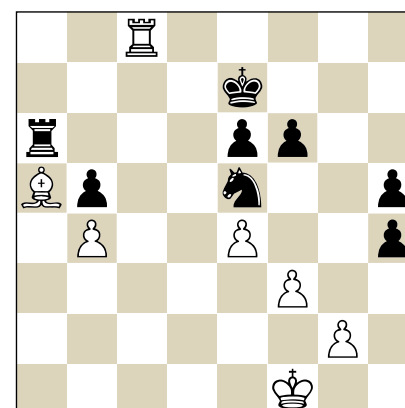
31.h4

The position is still very much equal. For instance, in case of 31.♖c7 ♔d6 32.♜b7 ♔c6 we're already in a move-repetition situation. The move he played is a bit strange. After the game Anish told me that he felt he was a bit better and could play for a win, and that he was afraid I would block the position with ...h4. Still, the text-move is not the losing one.

31...gxh4 32.♜c8

He could still go for move repetition with 32.♜c7. His choice surprised me, as it allows me to activate my knight.

32...♞e5



33.♜c7+ Here I thought 33.♜c5 was better, because compared to the game my king is worse on e7 than on d6, yet after 33...h3 34.gxh3 ♞xf3 35.♜xb5 (more precise was to first go 35.♔g2) it should objectively be a draw, although White already has some problems.

Also 33.♜h8 was better than the text-move.

33...♔d6 34.♜b7

Here, too, playing the rook to the h-file looked better. Now I am getting some real chances.

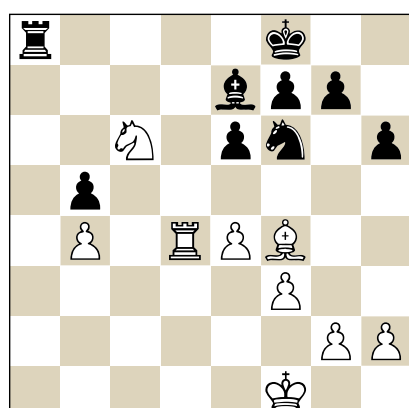
Anish had not won a single game in the tournament, which may have been the reason why he continued to play for a win. On the other hand, his choice of opening was a bit strange in this respect, as White has nothing. If he really was that eager to win, he should have played differently, since it was not very likely that I would allow him to beat me in the same manner as Kasimdzhanov had done.

23...♔f8 This I played immediately.

24.♞c6 There are not many plans for White. For example, 24.b5 would give me a very good square for the bishop: 24...♞c5.

24...b5 Now I am in time to play the pawn to b5.

25.♜d4

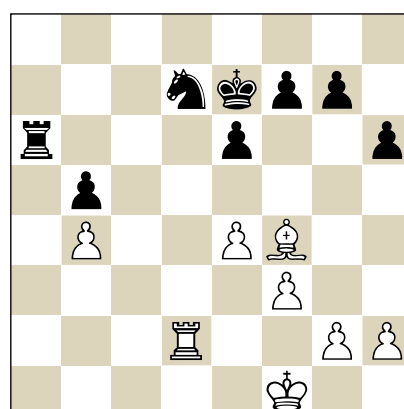


25...♜a6

As after 25...♔e8 26.♞xe7 ♔xe7 he can put the bishop on d6 with check. In the game I get the same position, but without allowing in the bishop.

26.♞xe7 ♔xe7 27.♜d2 ♞d7

The position is still equal, but if I manage to get my knight to c4, I would already have small chances to play for a win.



28.♜c2 A good move, improving the position of the rook.

28...g5

Asking the bishop where it wants to go. I don't have time to attack the pawn on b4 with 28...♜a4, because then 29.♜c6 is good and the pawn cannot be touched. I could go 29...e5 then, and the position is still very much equal.

29.♞c7 f6

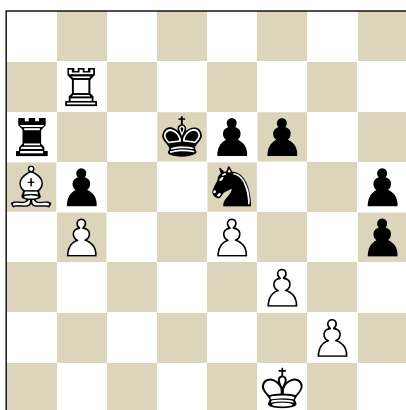
Aimed against the strong positional threat e5.

30.♞a5

Closing off the rook.

30...h5

In some variations the pawn on h6 might be weak, so I decided to advance it.



34...h3 35.gxh3 ♖xf3 36.♖xb5 ♜d2+ This check seemed logical to me, but perhaps 36...e5 is even stronger. 36...♜g5 was another option.

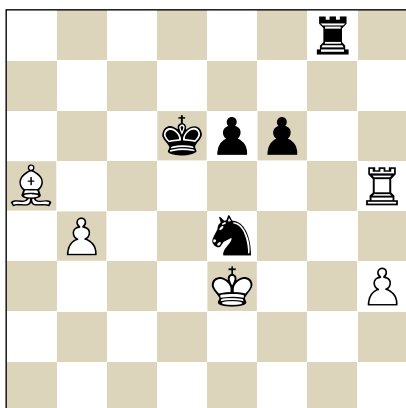
37.♔g2 ♖a8

I could have taken on e4 of course, but I first wanted to activate the rook.

38.♖xh5 ♖g8+ 39.♔f2 ♜xe4+

And take the pawn with check.

40.♔e3 Reaching move 40. I could see that Anish was not happy with the position by now.



40...f5

With tenacious defending White might still make a draw, but the situation has become precarious.

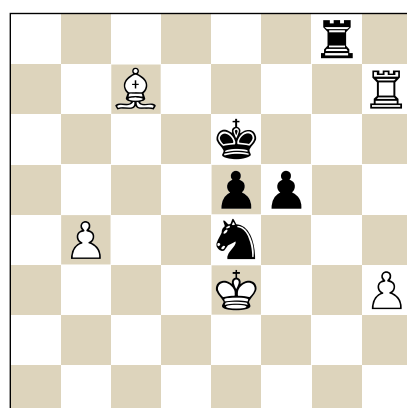
41.♖h7

This looks logical, to have a check with the bishop on c7, but on h5 the rook kept me from playing ...e5, as I cannot give up the protection of the f5-pawn.

41...e5

Now things are already looking gloomy for White.

42.♙c7+ ♔e6



43.♔d3

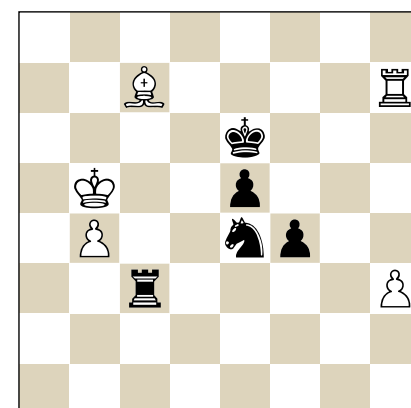
All this was what I had more or less calculated when I played 37...♖a8. I also looked at 43.b5 ♖g3+ 44.♔e2 f4, when it's hard not to notice the really bad position of the white king.

43...♖g3+ 44.♔c4

The king tries to escape to the queen-

side, but this allows me to start pushing my pawns.

44...♖c3+ 45.♔b5 f4



Now White is clearly lost. The advancing pawn is going to cost him a piece.

46.♖h6+ ♔d5 47.♙b6 f3 48.♖h8 ♖a3

Threatening mate with 49...♜d6.

49.♙g1

The endgame after 49.♙c5 ♜xc5 is completely hopeless for White.

49...f2 50.♙xf2 ♜xf2 51.♖d8+ ♔e4 52.♔c6 ♖c3+

White resigned.

■ ■ ■

Mamedyarov's four wins came at the expense of the bottom four on the cross-table. Against Kasimdzhanov in Round 6, he mounted a strong king-side attack with black that dwarfed White's queenside counterplay.



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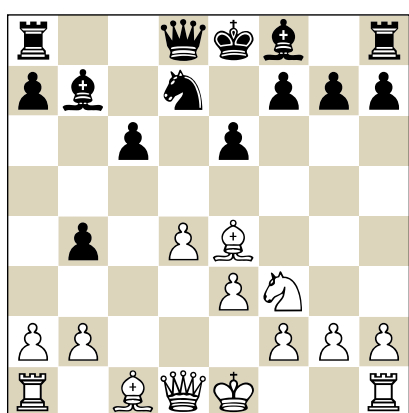


NOTES BY
Jan Timman

SL 9.2 – D47

Rustam Kasimdzhanov
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov
London 2012 (6)

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e3
e6 5.♗f3 ♗bd7 6.♙d3 dxc4 7.
♙xc4 b5 8.♙d3 b4 9.♗e4 ♗xe4
10.♙xe4 ♙b7**

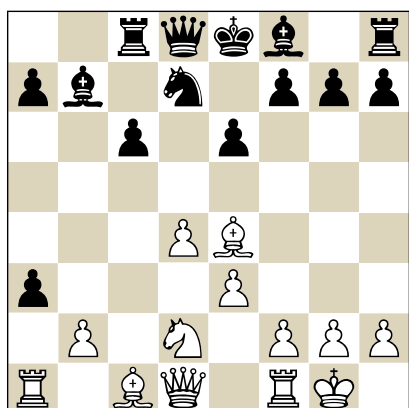


11.♗d2 This knight manoeuvre was introduced in Savon-Ree, Wijk aan Zee 1972. White may possibly want to take his knight to c4 and reserves square f3 for the king's bishop.

11...♖c8

The usual move is 11...♙e7, intending to castle as quickly as possible. Mamedyarov has a different plan. He covers the c-pawn in order to be able to play his bishop to a6 if he so desires.

12.a3 bxa3 13.0-0

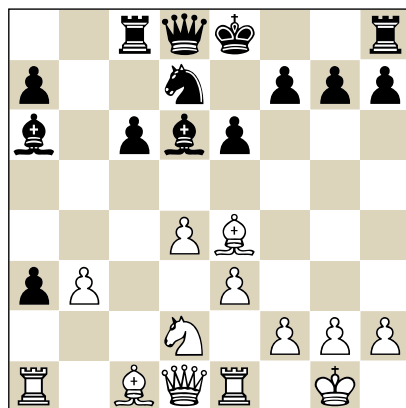


A well-known idea. White does not have to recapture on a3 at once, since a swap on b2 would now be too dangerous for Black.

13...♙a6 14.♖e1 ♙d6

An interesting idea was 14...♙b4, intending to meet 15.bxa3 with 15...♙a5, after which the black bishops hinder White's further mobilization.

15.b3

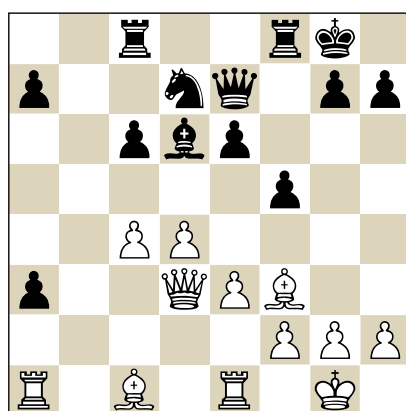


This yields White a slight opening advantage. Black will soon have to give up his bishop pair.

15...♗e7 16.♗c4 ♙xc4 17.bxc4 0-0 18.♗d3

Another accurate move. White is attacking two pawns at the same time.

18...f5 19.♙f3

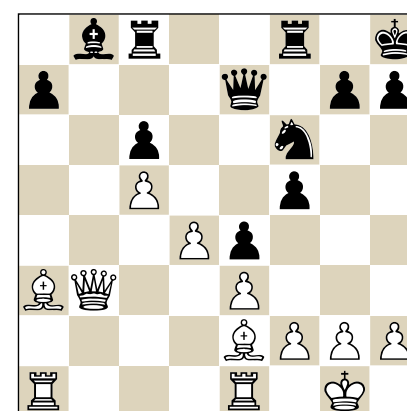


19...e5

The positions are becoming clear: White will get a free hand on the queenside, while Black will have to play for an attack. If White manages to defend effectively, he will have a large strategic advantage; the same principle as in the King's Indian, except with a different pawn structure.

20.c5 ♙b8 21.♙xa3 e4 22.♗b3+ ♗h8 23.♙e2 ♗f6

The computer gives the advance 23...f4 as Black's best bet here, but Mamedyarov probably didn't like the fact that this would enable White to take his king's bishop to an excellent position with 24.♙g4 ♖ce8 25.♙h3.



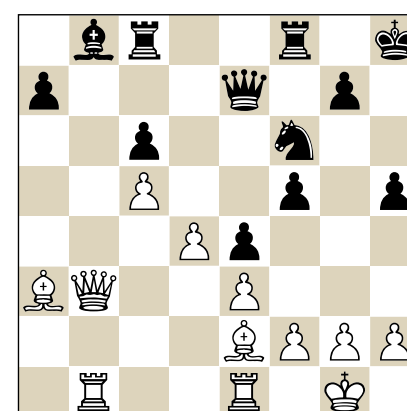
24.♖ab1

An important strategic moment. White's best move here was 24.♙c1!. It is not in itself so obvious to withdraw the bishop, but it is important to prevent the advance of the enemy f-pawn, while the white rook has such an excellent position on a1: the black a-pawn is kept in check, while the rook will be able to open fire on the c-pawn from a6.

Instead, White takes his rook to the open file in order to penetrate on b7. This plan is less strong.

24...h5

The computer again indicates 24...f4 as Black's best option, after which White's best bet is to continue with 25.exf4 ♙xf4 26.♗c2, maintaining a slight plus, because Black will find it difficult to continue his attack. So Black postpones his advance. By pushing his h-pawn he makes 25.g3 unattractive for White in view of 25...h4.



25.♗b7

Houdini gives 25.g3 as White's best move anyway and indicates that White has a large, almost decisive advantage after 25...h4 26.♙a6. Normal mortals find this hard to follow; first you play

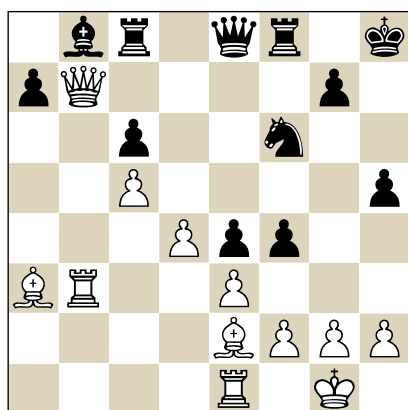
into your opponent's hands, and then you take your best defensive piece to the other wing. There are bound to be far-fetched concrete variations to back up this assessment, but I think it would go too far to work them all out here.

25...♔e8 26.♖b3

And here the computer regards 26. ♖b2 as stronger. This, too, is hard to fathom. The rook seems to be positioned well on b3. Once Black has played ...f4, the rook can be diverted to the kingside via the third rank.

26...f4

Black can no longer postpone this advance.



27.♖eb1

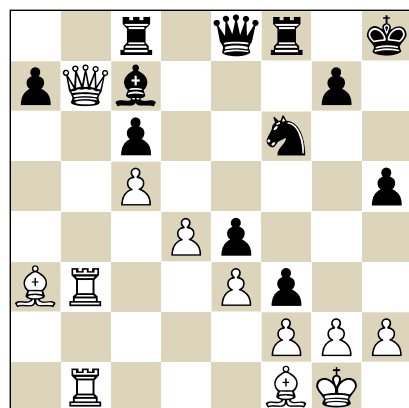
A strange mistake. White gives his opponent a free hand on the kingside. Another strange thing is that Houdini gives the text as the best move, although it quickly thinks better of it. Necessary was 27.exf4, intending to meet 27...♙xf4 with 28.♙c1, yielding White a slight plus again.

27...f3

Of course. Now Black will get dangerous attacking chances.

28.♙f1 ♙c7

A typical little move. Black wants to possibly work with 29...♖b8.



29.♖a6

A serious mistake. White should have taken preventive measures on the kingside with either 29.g3 or 29.h3.

29...♖g6

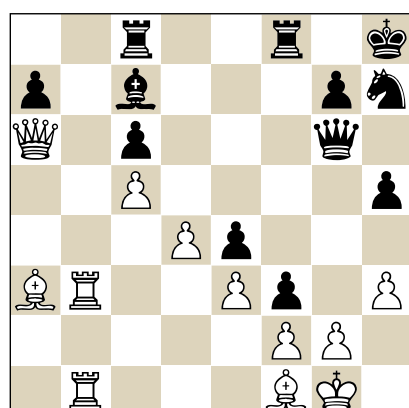
Strangely enough, Mamedyarov fails to exploit this. After 29...fxg2 30.♙xg2 the knight sortie 30...♘g4 would be winning. White would have no defence against the black assault.

30.h3

The only defence. Square g4 is taken away from the enemy knight.

30...♘h7

On its way to different pastures. Black wants to involve the knight in the attack via g5.



31.d5

The time-trouble phase has started, and Kasimdzhanov does his best to fight back. With the text he exploits the pin on the sixth rank.

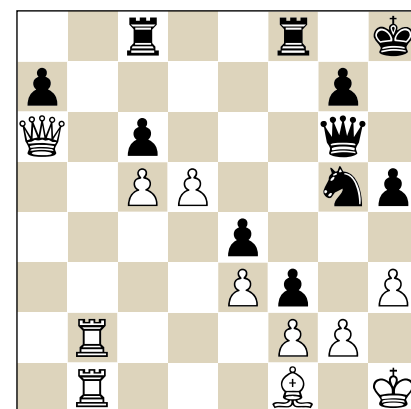
31...♘g5 32.♙h1 ♙e5

Activating his bishop.

33.♙b2

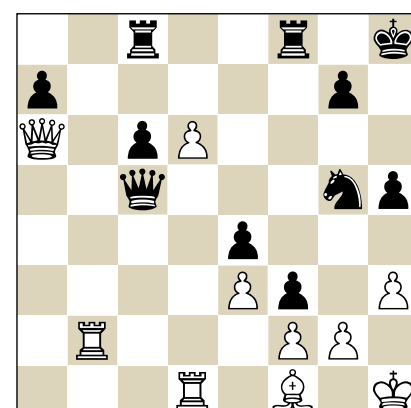
And White forces him to swap it. Both players handle this part of the game very well.

33...♙xb2 34.♖3xb2



34...♙f5 35.d6 ♖xc5 36.♖d1

But here White goes wrong again. He should have driven the black knight to a passive square with 36.h4!, after which Black's advantage would have been more modest.



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MACAULEY PETERSON

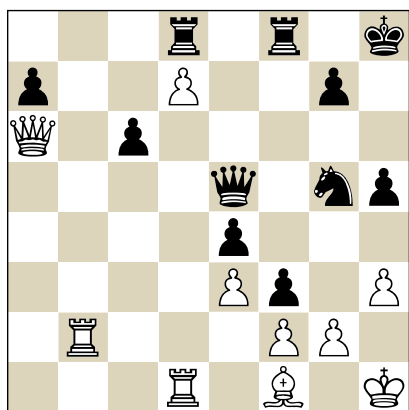
Some guys have all the luck. After he had shared first place in the London Grand Prix, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov returned to Azerbaijan to get married.

36...♖cd8 Now Black hesitates too long with the swap on g2. After 36...fxg2+ 37.♙xg2 ♖cd8 he could have maintained his positional advantage.

37.d7

In itself it is understandable that White tries to create counterplay with his advanced d-pawn. But it was of paramount importance to protect the kingside. After 37.g3! Black's advantage would have been considerably less. The point is that after 37...♖xd6 38.♖xd6 ♙xd6 39.♖b5! ♙f6 40.♖c5 Black can no longer defend his c-pawn. Black keeps his passed a-pawn, but it is not of much consequence.

37...♙e5

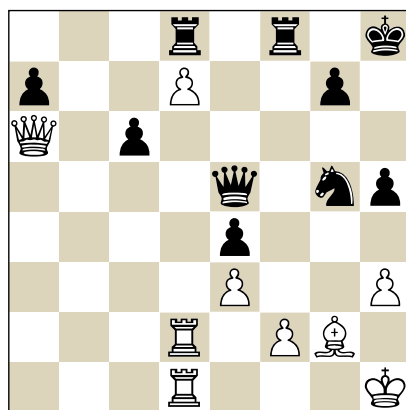


38.♖bd2 White's best practical chance was 38.♙b7, with the point that after 38...fxg2+ 39.♙xg2 ♘f3 40.

♙xf3 ♖xf3 White has the surprising defence 41.♙b8!, preventing Black from launching a mating attack, so that he will have to settle for an end-game that he will be able to win with accurate play. The crucial variation continues as follows: 41...♖xb8 42.♖xb8+ ♙xb8 43.d8♙+, and now White would have drawing chances after the queen swap. Winning is 43...♖f8!, since after 44.♙xb8 ♖xb8 Black would be able to quickly put a rook behind one of his passed pawns. 44.♙g5 is insufficient as well in view of 44...♙b5, and Black is winning.

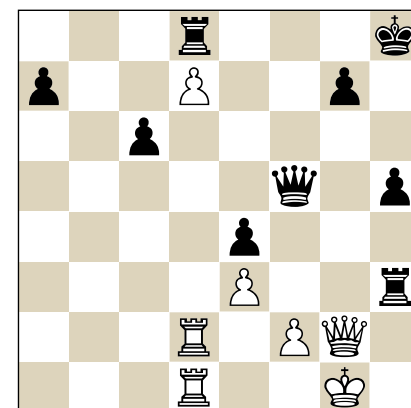
38...fxg2+ Finally. The black attack has become unstoppable.

39.♙xg2



39...♘f3 Forcing the swap. Interestingly enough, the white d-pawn has become irrelevant.

40.♙xf3 ♖xf3 41.♙f1 ♙f5 42.♙g2 ♖xh3+ 43.♙g1



43...♖h4! On its way to g4, after which the advance of the black a-pawn will decide the issue.

44.♙f1 a5 45.♖d4 a4

White resigned.

■ ■ ■

Kasimdzhanov said he had underestimated Black's potential. 'I realized that he might get a pretty serious attack, but White also has a lot of positional trumps... it turned out that White's play is a bit slow, and Black was coming pretty unpleasantly.'

Mamedyarov's win in Round 9 gave him a half point lead, such that two draws were enough to secure the tie for first place.

Gelfand had to win in the last round to catch Mamedyarov. For his game with Kasimdzhanov, Gelfand prepared a line against the Moscow Variation of the Slav, which he expected, since Rustam had played it earlier against Wang Hao.

SL 6.8 – D43

Boris Gelfand

Rustam Kasimdzhanov

London 2012 (11)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♙g5 h6 6.♙xf6 ♙xf6 7.e3 g6 'I also played the Moscow Variation against Rustam in our Candidates' match in 2007, but another system, and this ...g6 is a pretty new line.'

8.♙e2

Wang Hao played 8.♘e5 against Kasimdzhanov.

A field in flux

Notably absent from the Grand Prix field are the top three players in the world, Magnus Carlsen, Levon Aronian, and Vladimir Kramnik. Even as the location of the first GP tournament remained uncertain, Agon and FIDE attempted to sign on the world's best.

The incentive for the top three to participate is considerably lower than for most players: they are already qualified for the Candidates' by rating, and will have strong prospects to qualify for the next cycle as well, *without* the GP. At the same time, all three have invitations and commitments which make it difficult to schedule participation in the required four GP events.

In July, with the tournament moved to London, FIDE finally announced the full field. Gata Kamsky was briefly included in the list in place of Vugar Gashimov, who qualified by rating. But the next day, Gashimov's name was back in the list 'following a technical clarification.'

Gashimov is currently undergoing treatment for a brain tumour, and requested to play only in the events scheduled for 2013, to provide for ample recovery time. He was nevertheless signed on to play in Tashkent, until October, when he was replaced by Kamsky. Gashimov's continued participation in the GP series is uncertain.

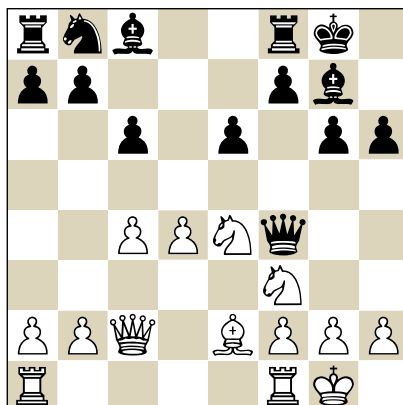
In August, Sergey Karjakin and Ruslan Ponomarev requested to be moved from the first leg in London, due to conflicting invitations from Bilbao and Poikovsky, and were replaced by Peter Svidler and Ivanchuk.

Just days before the start of London, however, Svidler was forced to withdraw for family reasons.

Michael Adams served as a last minute replacement in London, but Svidler returns to the GP series in Tashkent.

8...g7 9.e4 dxe4 10.♘xe4 ♔f4 11.♔c2 0-0 12.0-0

'We followed the game Moiseenko-Korobov but then he prepared this novelty ...c5, which is really strong, and I didn't anticipate it.'



12...c5!

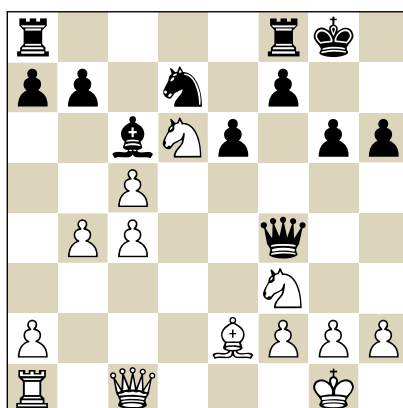
'It's a really beautiful idea because the c5-square is protected twice, and you go precisely there. It's a really beautiful and deep idea.'

12...f5?! 13.♘c5 ♕xd4 14.♘d3 ♔d6? 15.c5 ♔d8 16.♘f4, and g6 cannot be defended. Moiseenko went on to win in Moiseenko-Korobov, Kharkov 2010.

13.dxc5 ♕d7 14.b4

Gelfand noted that b4 was 'a kind of a bluff', except that a bluff is a calculated risk, whereas, 'here I made a move and only then I realized what a mistake I had made.'

14...♕xa1 15.♔xa1 ♕c6 16.♘d6 ♘d7 17.♔c1

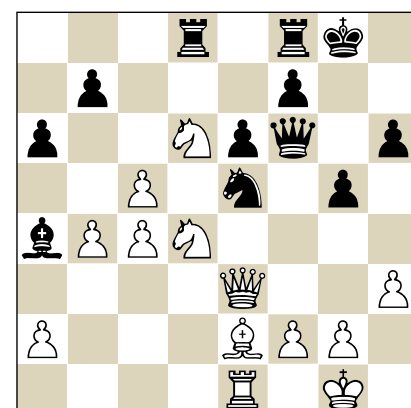


'I have strong compensation, but still, I'm not sure it was a good idea to suggest a queen exchange, because actually he could take and in this case he would have had a good position.'

17...♔f6

17...♔xc1+ 18.♔xc1 'It seems that I have a devastating threat, b5, but he has this defence 18...♔fd8 and I can never play b5 because of ...♘xc5. Often in chess it's all little details. If one pawn or one piece would be placed differently, probably the queen exchange would be in White's favour, but here exactly in this position, it was in Black's favour.'

18.♔b1 g5 19.♔e3 ♔ad8 20.♘d4 a6 21.♔e1 ♘e5 22.h3 ♕a4

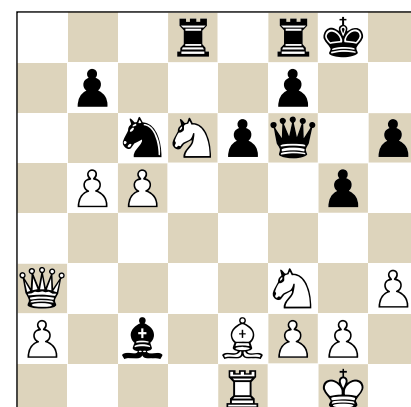


23.♔a3 More precise is 23.♘f3 ♘g6 24.♘xb7 ♔b8 25.♔a3.

23...♘c6

23...♔f4 is a nice defensive resource: 24.♔xa4 ♔xd4, when 25.♘xb7 would allow Black to go on offence: 25...♔c3! 26.♔f1 ♔d2 27.♕h5 ♘d3, with a strong attack.

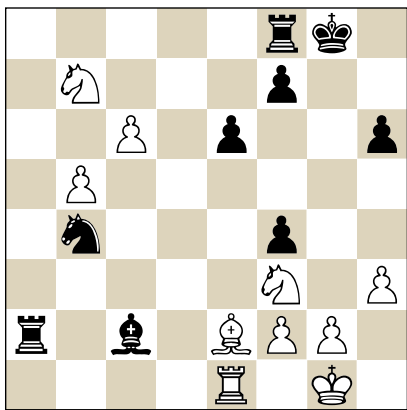
24.♘f3 ♕c2 25.b5 axb5 26.cxb5



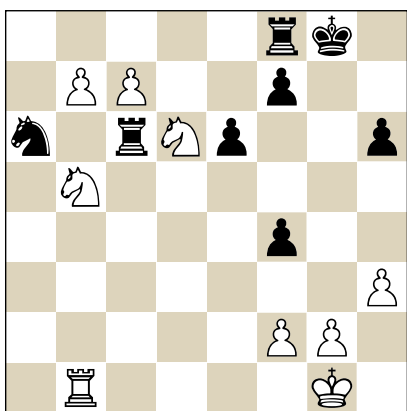
26...♔a8 26...♘d4 would not have helped: 27.♘xb7 ♘xe2+ 28.♔xe2 ♔d3 29.♔b4 (White's king is safe enough) 29...♕d1 30.♔d2 ♔xf3 31.♔b1 ♔xh3 32.♔xd1 (32.gxh3? ♕f3 and Black can make trouble) 32...♔c3 33.c6 winning.

27.♔c1 ♘b4 28.♔d2! ♔f4 29.♔xf4 gxf4 30.♘xb7 ♔xa2 31.c6

White's pawns are far too strong.



**31...♙fa8 32.♘d6 ♖d3 33.♖xd3
♘xd3 34.♙f1 ♙c2 35.♘d4 ♙c5
36.b6 ♘b4 37.c7 ♙f8 38.♙b1
♘a6 39.♘4b5 ♙c6 40.b7**



40...♘xc7 41.♘xc7 An amusing computer move is 41.♘c8! with the dual threat of 42.b8♔ and 42.♘e7+, but Boris was quick to point out, ‘we are not here to compete with computers. When you see an ending with a piece up you don’t miss this opportunity.’

41...♖xd6 42.b8♔ ♖xb8 43. ♖xb8+ ♕h7 44.♖b4 ♖d1+ 45.♕h2 e5 46.♘e8 f5 47.♖b7+ ♕g6 48. ♖g7+ Black resigned.



Leinier Dominguez, Veselin Topalov, Anish Giri, Wang Hao and Peter Leko admire a chess set more ornate than they are used to at an exhibition in the Saatchi Gallery.

The trio shared the 420 Grand Prix points of the top three places equally, and each earned 22,500 euro. On the symbolic tiebreak, Topalov edged out Mamedyarov and Gelfand, and was awarded a medal bearing the World Chess logo.

Big city, little quibbles

Being in a cosmopolitan metropolis has clear advantages in terms of prestige and international media appeal. But there are some drawbacks when resolving problems that crop up out of an organizer's control.

Simpson's-in-the-Strand informed Agon late in the process that the restaurant was forced to keep a prior one-day obligation for the space used as a playing hall. That necessitated moving one of the tournament's rounds into

an adjacent room, normally used for the press and post-mortems.

At least one player complained that in their hotel, morning construction outside would wake them, sometimes with the odd profanity-laced banter between workers. Similar renovations were audible in the playing hall on a few occasions, although the disturbance was kept to a minimum.

‘The playing hall I think is beautiful, and the design is beautiful,’ Gelfand observed. ‘Some things in London were done brilliantly. Some things still have to be learned by the new team. So it’s really too early to judge.’

Paulson's team is not involved in the organization of the Tashkent leg of the series, which is being handled by FIDE and Husan Turdialiev of the Uzbekistan Chess Federation.

This year has illustrated what a mammoth undertaking the World Championship cycle can be for one company, filled with logistical and organizational challenges, drama, fierce contests and conflicting interests. All things considered, they have come through their first trial by fire successfully, displaying ingenuity and gusto along the way.

The next big test will be the Candidates' tournament, in March. If all goes according to plan, World Chess will become big news, and everyone will know, 'The Best Mind Wins.' ■

London 2012															cat. XX			
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		TPR	
1	Veselin Topalov	IGM	BUL	2752	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	½	7	2839
2	Boris Gelfand	IGM	ISR	2738	½	*	½	0	½	1	1	½	1	½	½	1	7	2840
3	Shakhriyar Mamedyarov	IGM	AZE	2729	½	½	*	0	½	½	½	½	1	1	1	1	7	2841
4	Alexander Grischuk	IGM	RUS	2754	½	1	1	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	6½	2802
5	Peter Leko	IGM	HUN	2737	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	1	½	½	½	½	6	2774
6	Wang Hao	IGM	CHN	2742	½	0	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	5½	2738
7	Michael Adams	IGM	ENG	2722	½	0	½	½	½	½	*	½	0	½	½	1	5	2704
8	Vassily Ivanchuk	IGM	UKR	2769	0	½	½	½	0	½	½	*	½	½	½	1	5	2700
9	Rustam Kasimdzhanov	IGM	UZB	2684	½	0	0	½	½	½	1	½	*	½	½	0	4½	2678
10	Leinier Dominguez	IGM	CUB	2725	0	½	0	½	½	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	4½	2675
11	Anish Giri	IGM	NED	2730	0	½	0	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	*	0	4	2637
12	Hikaru Nakamura	IGM	USA	2783	½	0	0	½	½	0	0	0	1	½	1	*	4	2632

‘Well, Alekhine, did you solve it?’

A drawing of Alexander Alekhine from the Russian book on St. Petersburg 1909, where the 18-year-old promise won the All-Russian Amateur tournament.



O

ivil war was raging in Russia when Alexander Alekhine arrived in Odessa in October 1918, and power in the city changed hands many times. Osip Bernstein, who was also in Odessa at the time, recalled that ‘with every power transfer in Odessa Alekhine declared that he was finally free. He served in intelligence for the Whites, but when the Reds took the city, he immediately announced his liberation and started working for them.’

Alekhine’s reputation as a turncoat is proverbial. According to Bernstein’s account he changed sides an amazing nineteen times. At one point he was arrested and was jailed in the basements of the Extraordinary Commission, which became better known as the Cheka, the secret police. The story of how he was liberated remains murky to this day. He himself said that he avoided being shot by a

miracle and that he escaped by running away. In actual fact, after 10 days in jail he was set free and accepted to work in the foreign department of the Odessa regional administration.

It is known that in this period he continued playing chess. Among his opponents was a doctor named Kaufman. Commenting later on one of their games, the score of which was preserved by a miracle in the turmoil and destruction of war, Alekhine wrote: ‘To explain the fact that I overlooked such a simple win in this game I can add that it was played the day after I was finally freed from the Odessa Cheka, where I spent some time in obvious danger of being checkmated, so I was still rather tired.’

In the little-known memoirs of the famous Russian lawyer and social activist Oskar Osipovich Gruzenberg there

The child is the raw version of the adult, a sketch from which the full picture gradually comes to the surface. Recently Russian chess historian Sergey Voronkov unearthed a fascinating account of Alexander Alekhine's school days, showing a youngster whose behaviour foreshadows the complicated personality of the fourth World Champion. **Genna Sosonko** introduces this most remarkable memoir, written by Alekhine's classmate Georgy Rimsky-Korsakov.

is a story about Gruzenberg's attempt to leave Odessa at this very time. When he applied for permission to leave, the commissar of the Odessa regional administration advised him to go to 'Comrade Alekhine'.

'Alekhine? The chess player? He used to visit my daughter in St. Petersburg. He boasts about being in the Black Hundreds (and ultra-nationalist movement notorious for their anti-Semitism and pogroms – G.S.). His transfer to you, and especially to a high post, goes against nature. It's hard to go begging to a masquerading schemer,' Gruzenberg exclaimed.

After calmly listening to him, the commissar replied: 'Still, it's to Alekhine's credit that he was able to understand a historical phenomenon, which you were incapable of doing. But what-

ever your opinion is of Alekhine, you can't do without him if you want to leave.' Gruzenberg went to the commission, but he didn't shake hands with Alekhine. He was refused permission to leave.

Alekhine himself didn't like to recall those days, and when his friend, the Spanish master Pablo Moran, started a conversation about the period a quarter of a century later, Alekhine smiled and waved his hand: 'Oh, that's all water under the bridge.'

Indeed, there are still quite a few unsolved mysteries from that period of the future world champion's life. As there are from his younger years in general. We know a lot about Alekhine the champion, although his later life also knows mysteries, but what kind of person was he as an adolescent? To

that question a number of interesting answers are given in a fascinating eyewitness account that has only recently been unearthed. They can be found in the memoirs of Georgy Alexandrovich Korsakov (1891-1971), who was a classmate of Alekhine's.

In fact the real name of the author of the memoirs was not Korsakov but Rimsky-Korsakov. An heir to ancient noble blood, he was a relative of the composer Nikolai Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov. On his mother's side Georgy Alexandrovich was the grandson of Nadezhda Filaretovna von Meck, the patroness of another famous composer, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Her residence on Gogol Boulevard is now the Central Chess Club. Georgy Rimsky-Korsakov not only spent many years with young Sasha Alekhine in the same class at the

Polivanov School, but, like Alekhine, graduated from the prestigious Institute of Law in St. Petersburg.

After surviving the years of revolutionary chaos and civil war, Rimsky-Korsakov was terribly afraid that the fact that he had studied at the School of Jurisprudence in St. Petersburg, which was considered a bastion of reactionary Russia by the new regime, would come to light. Not without reason: in the late twenties, when the repression began against 'the old guard', his uncle was shot and Georgy Alexandrovich's brother was sent to a camp for many years.

After the revolution, when extreme caution soon became everyone's second nature, even Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky tried to hide that he had attended the exclusive and prestigious law school in St. Petersburg. Tchaikovsky was acknowledged as a great composer only shortly before the Second World War, when Stalin started urgently introducing Russian patriotism to the Soviet Union.

To avoid the fate of the former nobles and law school graduates, when everyone was required to obtain a passport in 1933 Georgy Alexandrovich Rimsky-Korsakov shortened his surname and gave a different place of birth. A musicologist and a research employee of the theatrical museum in Moscow, Korsakov started leading a low-profile life. During the war he was evacuated to Kazakhstan, where he taught music theory and history at the Petropavlovsk Institute of Music almost to the day he

died. Still, the Moscow of the turn of the century was etched in his memory forever, down to the tiniest details.

It is notable that in his memoirs, which were written half a century later, the author avoids mention of his studies at the Institute of Law, 'just in case'. Although the times had become comparatively liberal, you could never know how the Soviet government would view this fact if there were to be a sharper turn of the wheel.

Korsakov's memoir is most remarkable as it reveals so much about the later world champion. Much of the behaviour of the 12-year-old pupil is recognizable to anyone who knows the man he grew into.

A small censored fragment of Alekhine's classmate's memories was published in the magazine *Shakhmaty v SSSR* in 1967, and the complete text, preserved by the son of the former lawyer, Andrei Georgievich, was found by the Russian chess historian and journalist Sergei Voronkov quite recently. In the text as it is presented here, I cut passages from the memoirs which were not directly related to chess, completely preserving the style of the classmate of the teenager who became one of the greatest champions of our game.

Interestingly, at the beginning of the 21st century, probably encouraged by the new waves of nationalism in Russia that idolize the country's history before the Revolution of 1917, the descendants of Rimsky-Korsakov, who still live in Moscow, took back their ancestors' surname.

ALEKHINE THE SCHOOLBOY

Georgy Rimsky- Korsakov

This was in 1905. I was studying in Moscow then, at a private school named after L. I. Polivanov, a famous educator in his time. I was late for the start of the lesson in the sixth form and I had to take the only free place in the second row, on the bench closest to the window. Next to me was a boy who didn't stand out at all at first glance, with a surprisingly ordinary, unsophisticated appearance.

Snub-nosed, a big mouth, with tightly-pressed thin lips. The teeth in his mouth were quite yellow. Sandy light hair flopping down onto his forehead, like a badly-washed brush. Freckles on his pale face. Long, not very clean, red fingers, with nails gnawed down to the flesh. His hands were always cold. His voice was quite high and rather grating.

His eyes were probably the most noticeable feature of this basically rather unattractive youth, in fact. His eyes were watery and transparent with a yellow tint, expressing nothing – 'empty'. When he looked at you, you couldn't be sure if he was seeing anything, if he was looking at the person talking to him or staring into space.

The boy's gait was light and quick, but somewhat ungainly and nervy, and, moreover, he had the habit of jerking, suddenly straightening himself, flinging his head back and forth and looking around with his unseeing eyes while contemptuously pursing his bloodless lips.

His eyesight really was bad, clearly, so he read up very close, leaning over



The prestigious School of Jurisprudence in St. Petersburg.

the book. His clothing consisted of a black school jacket with a belt and trousers, quite frayed, not brand new. Thus my neighbour's appearance was far from elegant and did little to dispose him favourably to me. His name was Alekhine.

From the very first days of my studies I felt extremely lonely. Having been used to friendships with my peers and a team spirit at school, Alekhine's aloofness shocked me. At first I took his silence as an expression of personal dislike for me, but I soon realized that Alekhine's attitude towards the entire class was just as indifferent. I also understood the reason why the only free place in the class was the one next to Alekhine. I should add that there was no enmity towards the future champion on the part of the class.

But while a certain solidarity and mutual understanding was established between students with different personalities and social and living situations on our arrival inside the walls of the school, some kind of barrier stood between Alekhine and the rest of the class that didn't allow for the usual friendly relations. Alekhine was 'present' during lessons, but he didn't share the interests of the class. I not only didn't get into any friendly conversations with him, but I don't remember us ever chatting at all.

Despite his excellent knowledge of all subjects, Alekhine never helped anyone. The first time during oral answers I still counted on the aid of my neighbour, but he was stubbornly silent, paying no attention to the sharp prods of my knee or the jabs of my fist to his side. This bothered me at first, as even the best student in our class, Lev Polivanov, the son of the headmaster, rarely hesitated to help a friend. This behaviour by Alekhine may have been due to enormous egoism or a desire not to be distracted, even for a minute, from his chess thoughts.

In all our lessons, except for Latin, which was taught by the school's



Georgy Rimsky-Korsakov, the author of a fascinating memoir, as a young man.

‘Standing up for a moment with a confused look on his face and twirling his reddish forelock, Alekhine would let out a happy ‘Aha!’, quickly grab a pen and write down the move he had thought of.’

headmaster, Alekhine was busy solving chess problems and with his extensive correspondence. Even back then he played chess 'remotely' with opponents from all over the world. But he clearly didn't have enough time for his chess correspondence, even though he worked as hard as he could at it. Sometimes he didn't even have enough paper to write out the chess problems. Having exhausted his supplies of paper, his notebooks and textbooks, he shamelessly took mine,

drawing chess diagrams and writing piece moves on them.

After thinking about his reply to a move that had been sent to him by some distant opponent, Alekhine in his turn took a postcard, and, having written his move on it, addressed it to somewhere like Chicago, London or Rio de Janeiro. It was clear that he received many similar postcards from all over the world with a variety of stamps. But 'profanes' such as myself couldn't have anything to do with the game of chess. You couldn't dream of getting some rare postage stamp from Alekhine from the Republic of Costa Rica, Nigeria or Cape Verde.

Completely immersed in his chess work, even in Divinity or French lessons, when all the students except for those who sat like a screen in the front row were indulging in some pleasant activity such as playing draughts, dominoes or even cards, or reading about the adventures of Sherlock Holmes, or just dozing peacefully, Alekhine alone could not be distracted from his chess labours.

He was so far removed from his surroundings that he wasn't always fully aware of where he was or what the lesson was about. Occasionally he would suddenly jump up from his game. The class went quiet and waited tensely to see what would happen next. Standing up for a moment with a confused look on his face and twirling his reddish forelock, Alekhine would let out a happy 'Aha!', quickly grab a pen and write down the move he had thought of.

If the teacher asked him a question, on hearing his name he quickly leapt up and stood there silently for a while, surveying the class with his narrowed, half-blind eyes, contorting his mouth into a painful grimace, as if he was trying to understand where he was and what was required of him. All this took place in no more than a cou-

Alekhine the schoolboy

ple of seconds, after which Alekhine's face brightened, and when the teacher repeated the question he answered quickly and correctly.

Alekhine studied very well. When and how he did his homework, I don't know. But he had an exceptional memory, and it was enough for him to glance at the textbook during a break in order to memorize a given lesson. Of course, he didn't listen to any of the teachers' explanations, since he was absorbed in his chess moves. And I should point out that the teachers didn't stop him from doing this, although they did sometimes allow themselves some ironic comments.

I remember our class work on algebra. All the boys were quiet. Some students, red-faced and sweating, agitated, scratching their pens, hurried to hand in their written work as quickly as they could. Others were pale and confused, looking around, all calling for help from their friends with their pathetic expressions. Suddenly Alekhine stood up excitedly, his face radiant, and surveyed the class with his eyes, while at the same time, as was his constant habit, twirling a tuft of the unkempt hair that hung over his forehead with his left hand.

'Well, Alekhine, did you solve it?' teacher Bachinsky asked him.

'I did... I sacrifice the knight, and

the bishop moves... and White wins!'

The class shook with laughter. The always restrained and correct Bachinsky chortled through his long moustache.

Alekhine was the son of very affluent parents. His father was a large landowner in Voronezh District, a leader of the nobility. His mother came from a well-known Moscow family of factory owners, the Prokhorovs. But Alekhine himself didn't have anything in his external appearance of the self-satisfied Moscow merchant, or, still less, the high-born noble landowner. Most likely he would have been taken for the son of a minor bureaucrat, perhaps the son of an accountant or a small trader.

Alekhine didn't like it when someone got his noble surname wrong. So when our 'old man', Father Rozanov, calling on Alekhine to answer in a Divinity lesson, constantly called him 'Olyokhin', with the stress on the 'yo', the future world champion also invariably corrected the honourable servant of the church, saying: 'My surname, father, is Alekhine, not Olyokhin.'

Towards the end of the school year my relationship with Alekhine became aggravating. I started getting annoyed with Alekhine's chess mania and the fact that I didn't have a normal neighbour on my bench, with whom I could

have shared the daily details of our school routine and discussed the more serious topics of our young life. What's more, there was no question that Alekhine was a nuisance to sit next to. He didn't mind taking up as much space on the bench as he wanted for his chess work, so he and I were in a persistent battle for 'living space'.

My books constantly fell into Alekhine's satchel, and getting them back from him was extremely difficult, so I had to buy myself new ones. He said he took them home absent-mindedly, by accident. But when these accidents occurred continuously for a whole year, it gave me grounds to consider them a manifestation of ill will.

I don't recall Alekhine having a close friend. I don't recall him taking part in the life of the class, in conversations on the topics that bothered us students. I never heard of him going to the theatre, to a concert or to an art exhibition. I didn't see him reading a book.

Nor did Alekhine give tickets to friends for a concert by the composer Rebikov, the takings from which, as was whispered into everyone's ear, were supposed to go into the account of the Moscow Committee of the RSDWP (Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party – G.S.).

Nor did Alekhine write letters to Tolstoy asking him to solve the prob-

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lems that worried many adolescent boys standing on the threshold of their life as men. Alekhine didn't sit on the window-sills of our school hall and shout out words to the girls who walked passed the school, which, fortunately, they couldn't hear.

Nor did Alekhine visit our school 'club', where in the breaks students of whom society would have disapproved hastily took greedy gulps of the smoke of cheap cigarettes while telling dirty jokes. Alekhine bypassed all these large and small aspects of school life without a second glance, and perhaps without even noticing them.

Later, when I transferred to study in Petersburg, I found out that Alekhine had enrolled in a university course at the Institute of Law. I had friends among the law students, classmates of Alekhine, and when I was with them I also encountered my colleague from school. These meetings brought me no pleasure, nor him either, evidently.

It was then that I heard how the law students made fun of Alekhine's extraordinary 'professorial' absent-mindedness, his 'civilian' soul, the lack of any officer's bearing in him, and especially his inability to drink wine, which according to an unwritten rule of honour some of the law students considered extremely reprehensible. (Then again, later he apparently learned how to do this.)

They said that on occasion, through absent-mindedness, instead of a cocked hat – the prescribed headgear for law students – Alekhine would put some old hat on his head or even a cardboard box and go out like that, for which he endured harsh rebukes from the administrators of the institute.

On the other hand, I think that in this period of his life much of Alekhine's absent-mindedness and eccentricity stemmed from youthful mischievousness, a desire to be noticed, to stand out, to clown around. When his colleagues reacted loudly and joyfully to some surprising 'ridiculous' escapade by Alekhine, happy little sparks appeared in his own eyes, and his face



'I don't recall Alekhine having a close friend. I don't recall him taking part in the life of the class, in conversations on the topics that bothered us students.'

expressed not embarrassment, but a feeling of enjoyment and satisfaction: 'Here they're saying I'm such a – I don't care about anything, but just you try this...' My relations with Alekhine were ruined because I took his antics seriously instead of seeing them as a joke.

Soon after starting at the institute Alekhine achieved his first significant victory on the chess battlefield. His picture appeared in all the newspapers and magazines. Caricatures also appeared. So, in *Peterburgskaya Gazeta* Alekhine was depicted as a schoolboy holding an enormous trophy cup and crumpling under its weight. This cheap wit was aimed at the undemanding tastes of Petersburg residents, the readers of this street paper.

The road he travelled to glory wasn't always straight or smooth. Besides the joy of victories and successes he also

A plaque on the facade of the Polivanov Gymnasium in Moscow tells passers-by that the later World Champion Alexander Alekhine studied here from 1901-1910.

knew bitter moments of defeat. And he made some serious mistakes in his choice of path. Which occurred, in my view, mainly because of his insufficient knowledge of life, which he overlooked due to lack of time, and therefore he was unable to comprehend the reality of situations.

Now, after many years have passed, it is clear to me: Alekhine's quirks of character and eccentricities, which distinguished him from the general population of schoolboys, which disturbed the young people around him or made them laugh, were signs of his exceptional gift. Not being a chess player myself, but always remaining Russian, I can happily forget all our youthful misunderstandings from half a century ago, remembering only that Alekhine, as a chess master, extolled the culture of the great Russian people and brought glory to his Russian name.

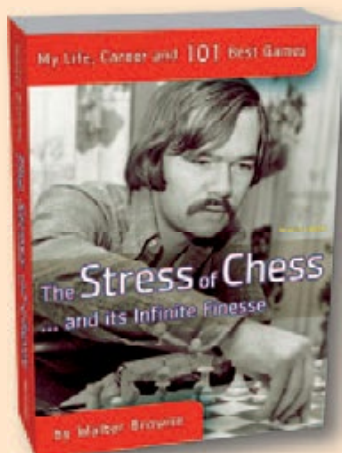
Petropavlovsk, 1960

■ ■ ■

Recently in Russia, to no less a degree than in the Soviet era, a trend has been obvious – praising their great compatriots, staying silent about their faults and weaknesses and admiring virtues which they did not possess. Alexander Alexandrovich Alekhine hasn't escaped this fate either. He was no angel, and everyone who knew him personally testified to that. But he doesn't need us to condemn him or forgive him. On the contrary, we need to understand all his heresies, complexes and weaknesses.

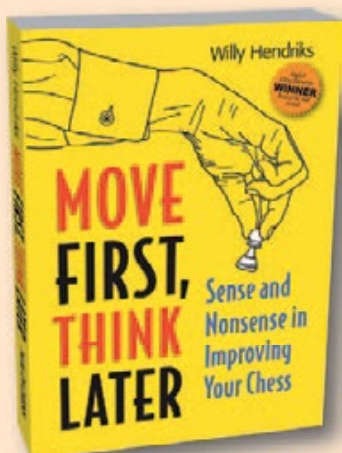
And the best way to praise unusual people is to talk honestly about their weaknesses and not attribute virtues to them which they did not possess: that ruins everything and even makes the truth false. ■

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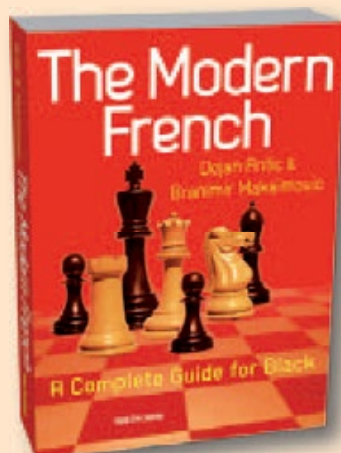


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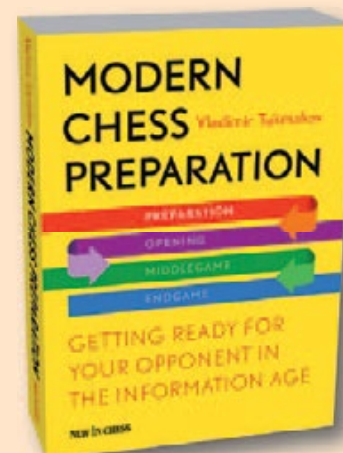


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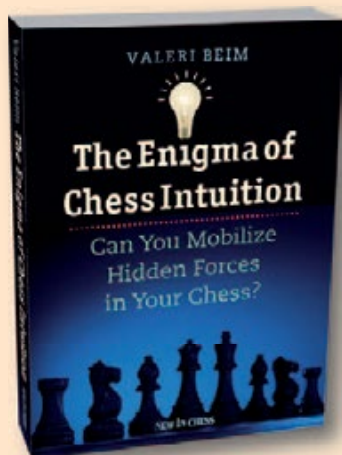
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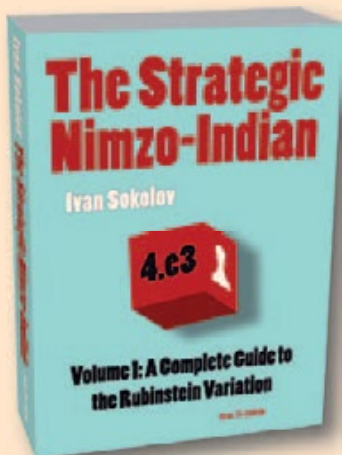
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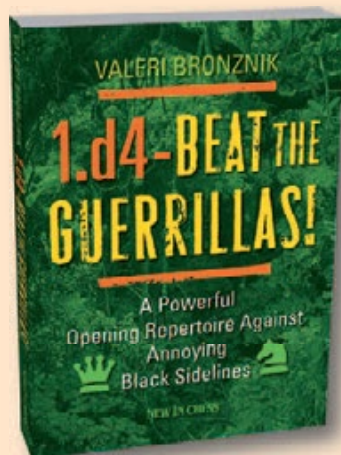
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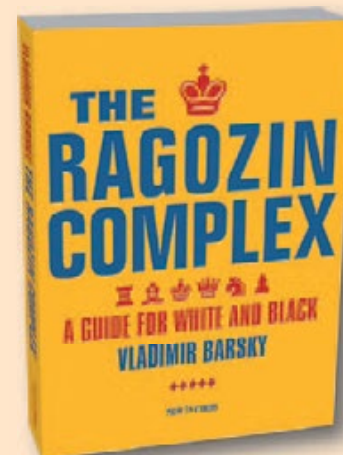
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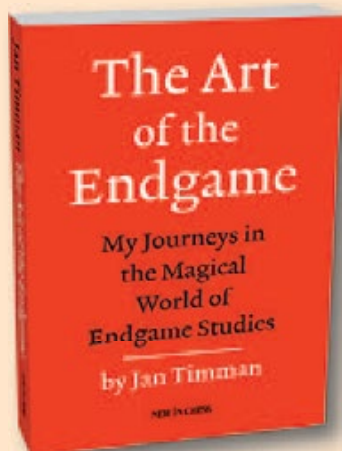
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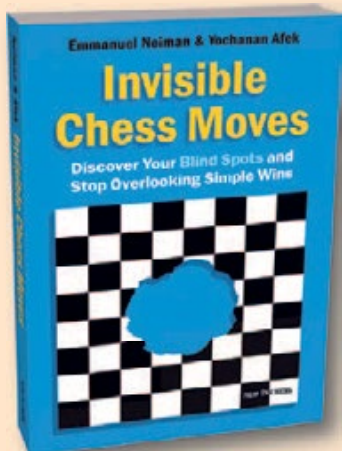
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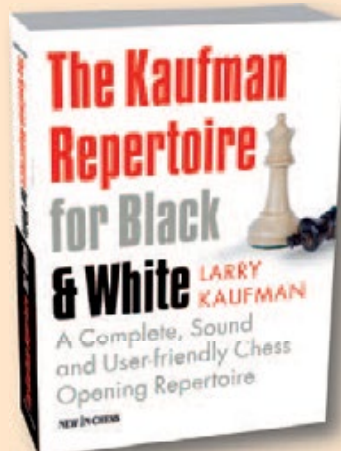


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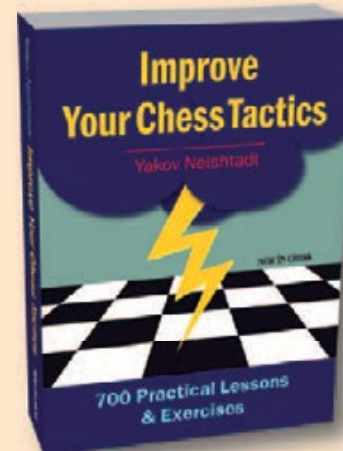


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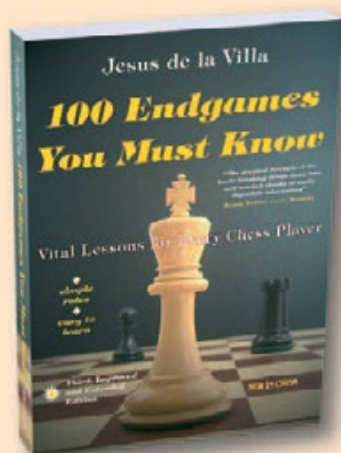
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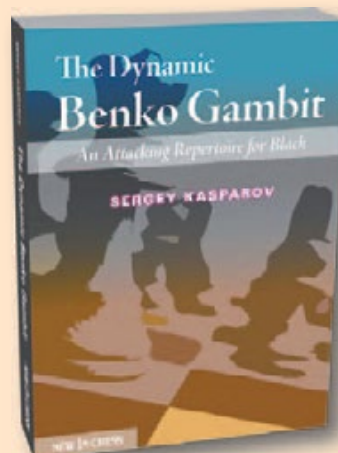
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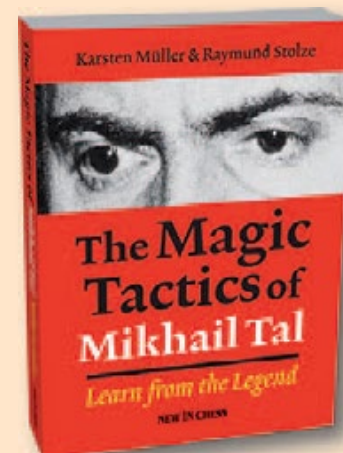
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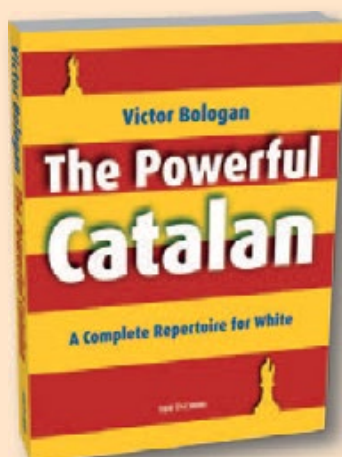
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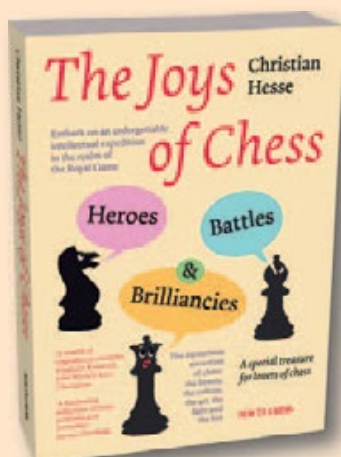
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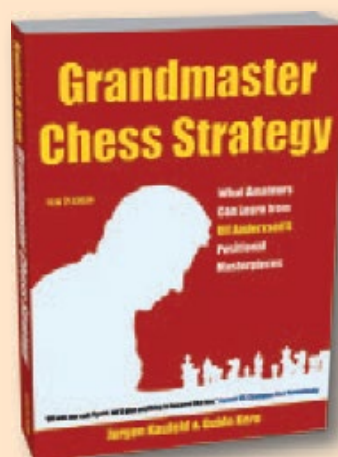
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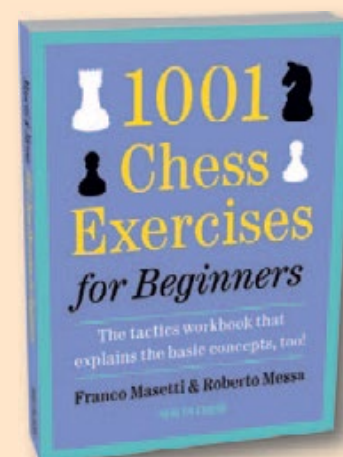
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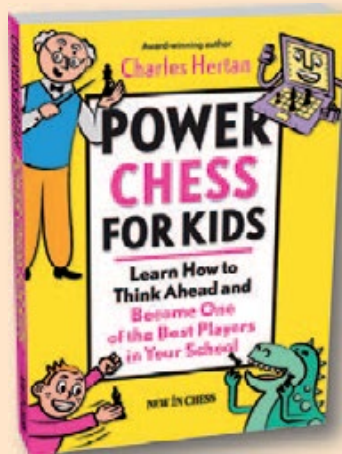
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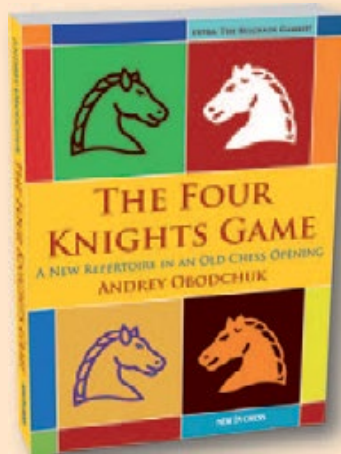
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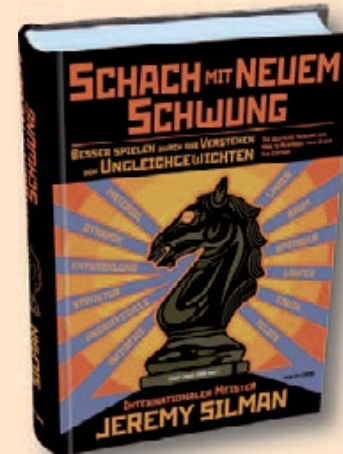
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Napoleon, of Corse!

One of the happiest memories of my childhood was re-enacting the Battle of Waterloo, with my father and older brother, using cheap, toy soldiers, on an upturned rug in the living room. The ugly, plastic rug undercover had a square grid – like a gigantic chessboard – which made positioning the battalions that much easier. It is unlikely that this rough family simulation bore too strict a resemblance to historical events, but at least, in our house, the brave English troops under the command of Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington, were always ready to repulse the last despairing fling of Napoleon Bonaparte's valiant Old Guard.

During a break in my difficult Candidates' quarter final match with Boris Gelfand, in Brussels 1991, I took the opportunity to visit the fields of Waterloo, in search of inspiration. The landscape was much as I had expected it to be – even the old farm houses were there – but with one important difference: the ridges I had read about, and which in my mind's eye were substantial hills from which to shoot down upon the enemy, were in fact barely more than little rumps. As a chess player, I should have realised how important it is to nurture even the smallest strategic advantages.

At the Istanbul Olympiad in Sep-

tember, I received an invitation from the tournament organiser and French Delegate to FIDE, Leo Battesti, to visit Corsica – the birthplace of Napoleon – for the last leg of the French Grand Prix. I had heard it was a beautiful island, but I had never been there and so, once conditions were agreed, I gladly accepted. I took the opportunity, en route, to stop off in Paris to see my daughter Kyveli, who is studying at the Sorbonne this year. After a delightful walk past Notre Dame, along the banks of the Seine, to the Louvre and back past the Pompidou, we feasted upon confit de canard, accompanied by a good bottle of wine, which, understandably, put me in an excellent mood. This being the 21st century, I shared my wonderful experience on Facebook, whereupon Laurent Fressinet and his wife Almira Skripchenko immediately invited us over to their apartment, which was nearby. There we also met Loek van Wely and his El Salvadorean girlfriend, Lorena Zepeda. It was a most pleasant evening, aside from my utter humiliation in the inevitable blitz games – although in mitigation, it should be stated that the other participants were not quite as alcoholically impaired ☺.

In the entire history of the Corsican Masters, only two invitees have flown to the wrong airport – Michael Adams being the first. Naturally, being English, I was the second, which meant a three hour scenic drive, over mountainous terrain, from Napoleon Bonaparte Airport in Ajaccio to the picturesque, old, Genoese capital of Bastia.

Leo Battesti is an extraordinary

character – charming, warm, effusive, dynamic and charismatic. As a leader of the Corsican nationalist movement, he served four years in prison, from 1978-1981, before receiving an amnesty under President François Mitterrand. Deeply passionate about Corsican language, culture and history, he emphasises that he has never been against the French people, only the 'system'. That is just as well, because he is highly likely to become the next President of the French Chess Federation. Leo's main stated goal is the mass popularization of the game. He has already made great strides in this direction on his native island. Corsica, by itself, has over 5,700 federation members, which compares with a mere 2,700 in England, in 2011 (although, thanks to a new scheme, the ECF numbers are now 8,000 and rising). Proudly, he boasted that the statistics show there are twice as many rated games played in Corsica (population 302,000) as in the entire British Isles. If he can replicate this success throughout France, then it can only be a matter of time before the already immensely strong national side becomes a consistent Olympiad podium finisher.

How has he achieved this remarkable result? Introducing chess to a large number of schools is certainly a key part of it, although one could also not help being amazed by the number and quality of prizes – including the latest expensive electronic games – dispensed in the junior tournaments. When you have the numbers, sponsors will follow (if properly solicited and cultivated), thus creating a virtuous cir-

cle. One manifestation of Leo's philosophy is his newspaper column which features a vulgar problem, 'mate in one'. He explains that the average standard of people who play chess is extremely low: they need to be enticed, not alienated as, unfortunately, they all too often are by traditional chess media. Surveys support Leo's contention – his daily puzzle is highly popular.

On to the actual event: I first needed to qualify for the 16 player, rapid-chess, knock-out tournament by finishing in the top eight of the preliminary Swiss. The other eight players, who included such luminaries as Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, Laurent Fressinet and Etienne Bacrot, had already ensured their participation from previous qualifiers on the mainland.

One should be exceedingly wary when one is told, by all and sundry, that progressing to the next stage is a 'piece of cake'. It rarely is. My first round opponent, a local boy rated more than 1,000 points below me, gave me a terrible fright. I am acutely

conscious, from vast experience in opens, that guys of around, say, 2100 or more can definitely play chess and that one often has to work very hard to beat them. Nevertheless, 1600 is so far beneath even that level that I could barely take him seriously. Perhaps I was expecting him to resign out of awe

One manifestation of Leo's philosophy is his newspaper column which features a vulgar problem, 'mate in one'.

at my magnificence. Well, he didn't: he played way above his level. Only when we reached a completely drawn ending of rook and two pawns each on the same side, with crowds gathered around the board in expectation

of a huge upset, did the difference in strength become apparent. I somehow won easily. It was a very narrow, nerve-wracking escape.

I had a further close shave a few rounds later against another local – IM Michael Massoni. Misplaying the opening – a French Defence – horribly, I was sucked into a tactical maelstrom and was extremely fortunate to survive into an endgame with only a modest material deficit. I then outplayed him, and even came close to winning, before he eventually achieved a draw. Incidentally under Leo's 'Corsica Rules', agreed draws are prohibited. I have to say this causes almost no hardship whatsoever with a fast time-limit.

In Round 7 I suffered a fiasco against the eventual winner, Gabriel Battaglini. I found his nervous demeanour – scouring the board intensely and punching the clock – somewhat irritating, which I allowed to affect me. When he escaped into a drawn rook and pawn endgame a pawn down, I stared at the board in both disbelief and annoyance. Alas, the punishment for this lack of self control was that I forgot about the clock and was duly flagged.

In the next round I could only draw against Shchekachev, which left me needing a win in the final game. I was paired, to my immense relief, against the silver-haired and modestly rated (2264) Christoph Frick from Germany. That relief vanished when I found myself staring down a gun barrel after about 15 moves, but he soon fell for a cheap tactical trick and I advanced.

For the knock-out phase we moved to the municipal theatre itself. The professionally-staged tournament was in many ways reminiscent of the superb Immopar Trophy of the 1990s, but with a more populist twist. The players were given a raucous welcome as they were summoned to their boards to the accompaniment of Van Halen's catchy 1983 hit 'Jump'.

The first round saw no real upsets. The Brazilian international Alexandr



During his Candidates' match against Boris Gelfand in Brussels in 1991, Nigel Short took the opportunity to visit the fields of Waterloo in the company of Constantin Van Hiel.



Short Stories

Fier was the strongest GM to be sent packing, but at least he had only travelled from Paris, rather than Sao Paulo, for this briefest of cameos. Fressinet overcame the fast and tricky Battaglini only with difficulty in extra time, but the other underdogs were put down mercilessly.

The legendary player, author and coach, Artur Jussupow, departed in the quarter finals at the hands of Maxime Vachier-Lagrave. Dutch hopes ended when Van Wely was dumped out by Fressinet. I blanked Ante Brkic from Croatia. Etienne Bacrot survived Tigran Gharamian's bold King's Gambit onslaught to progress.

A combination of psychological, technical and tactical errors led to my dismal defeat, with white, in the first game against Fressinet. I bounced back strongly in the second by confusing him in the opening, quickly obtaining an overwhelming position. In the ensuing time-trouble I missed various

chances to put the ball in the back of the net. I was almost certainly even lost for a couple of minutes before the game eventually petered out to a draw. The other match ended abruptly when Vachier-Lagrave uncharacteristically blundered.

We then moved to the Palais des Congres at the capital Ajaccio. At the junior tournament which preceded the grand finale I witnessed more illegal moves than I have seen in the last 30 years. Leo laughingly took this mild criticism in his stride, informing me that most of them had been introduced to chess only a couple of months earlier. This was a necessary part of broadening the base of Corsican chess and, in fairness, the level of play on the top boards was definitely high.

I have admiration for those who are willing to experiment in their efforts to promote chess. Nevertheless the Corsica Masters final featured one innovation – audible live commentary – that,

without providing headphones for the players, as in chess-boxing, ought to be buried forever. It was hard to tell which was most deleterious – the good moves suggested which influenced the outcome of the game, or the bad moves, which were profoundly distracting. Either way, it was intolerable. Bacrot retained his composure, comfortably winning the first. Fressinet's newly acquired ear-plugs for the second and final game were to no avail. Obtaining not a shred of advantage in a dull Giuoco Piano, he eventually blundered a piece while attempting to conjure up something out of nothing.

Last paragraph notwithstanding, I feel that Leo Battesti is on the right path with his fervent advocacy of chess for the masses. It was a thoroughly enjoyable event for everyone concerned. And for your writer, the cherry on the cake was a visit, on a cold, wet night, to the house of the great Corsican terrorist himself – Napoleon. ■



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Forcing Moves

Vive la France!

FIDE's website ranks countries by average rating of their top ten players. The biggest surprise? France's #4 men's ranking, ahead of for instance USA, England, and Olympic winner Armenia. Historically, the western cultural capital, Paris, is a magnet for brilliant minds: Picasso, James Joyce, Charlie Parker, Alekhine. But since the heyday of the Café de la Régence and icons like Philidor and La Bourdonnais, homegrown talent has been a rarity, until now. A prolific schedule of top-notch events like Cap d'Agde and Cappelle-la-Grande is key, yet the sudden French ascension remains somewhat mysterious. Since the '80s France turned out a steady stream of young talent such that Tkachiev was the only import on their 2012 Olympic team. The sting of a cheating scandal and suspension of star prospect S. Feller (and Bacrot's absence) may explain a lackluster Olympic performance, but French chess remains a 21st century force.

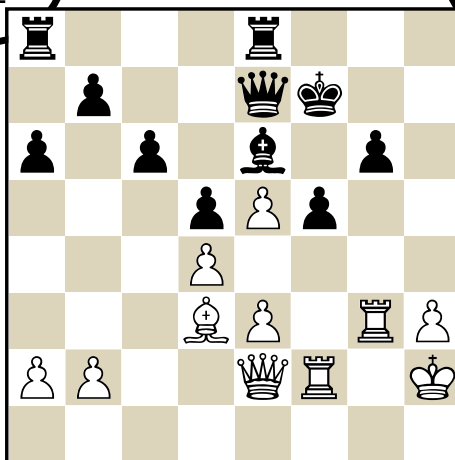
For each problem, the goal is to find the quickest and clearest winning line unless otherwise noted. A 'winning line' could range from checkmate to being a pawn up with no objective compensation for the opponent.

Level of difficulty:

1-4 stars, 1 is 'easiest' and 4 'most difficult'. The star rating refers to the difficulty of finding all the relevant variations, not just finding the right key move.

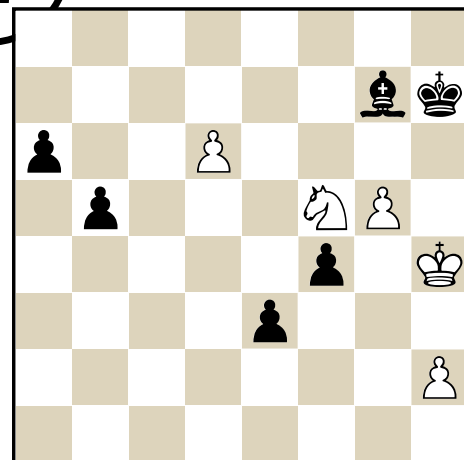
Solutions on page 95

① ★★★☆☆



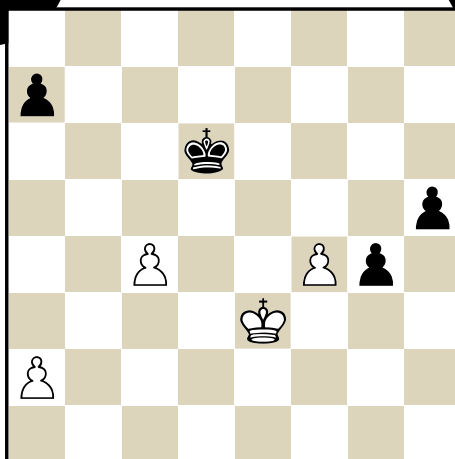
White to move and win

② ★☆☆☆☆



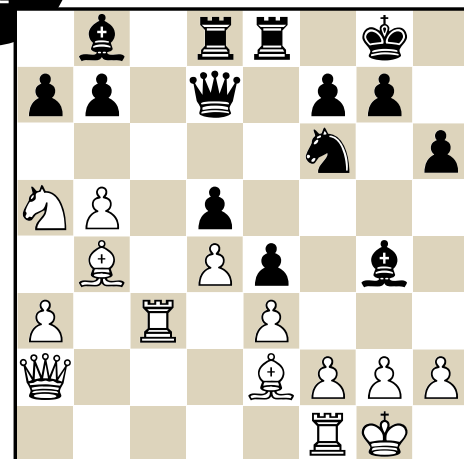
White to move and win

③ ★★★☆☆



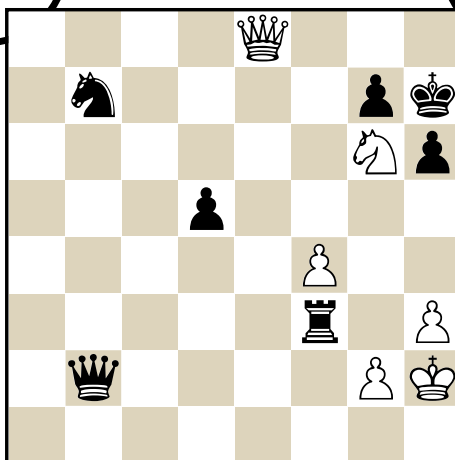
Black to move and win

④ ★★★☆☆



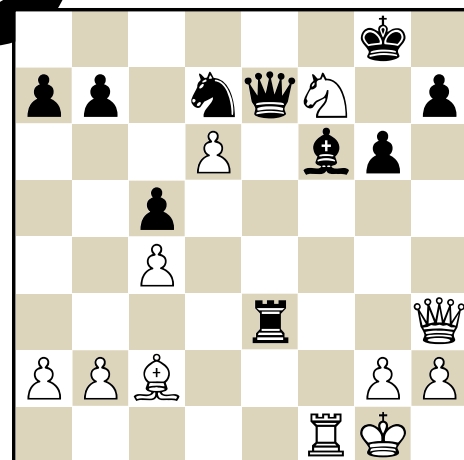
Black to move and win

⑤ ★★★☆☆



White to move and win

⑥ ★★★★★



Black to move and win

Hoogeveen

Stemming the leak

Hikaru

Nakamura arrived at the Univé Tournament determined to repair some of the rating damage he suffered at the London Grand Prix. Losing a depressing five games the American champion shed no fewer than 22 points in the British capital and even dropped out of the top-10. In Hoogeveen he followed the example set last year by Vladimir Kramnik (win your white games, draw with black), scoring $4\frac{1}{2}$ from 6 at the cost of Hou Yifan, Anish Giri and Sergey Tiviakov. Nakamura left with 4000 euro, the traditional glass chess set and 5 precious rating points.



NEW IN CHESS



NOTES BY

Hikaru Nakamura

RL 7.4 – C67

Hikaru Nakamura

Anish Giri

Hoogeveen 2012 (1)

I have been fortunate to have played in the Netherlands quite a few times during my chess career. However, this was the first time I had the opportunity to see the northern part of the country and play a tournament in Hoogeveen. Unlike past events, the whole atmosphere was quite different, from the great greenery and countryside feel to the unabashed friendliness of the locals as well as the very open nature of the playing hall.

This first-round game against Anish Giri really proved critical for my tournament victory. Coming off of a disaster in the London Grand Prix, followed by a shaky performance in the European Club Cup, it was imperative that I got off to a good start in Hoogeveen.

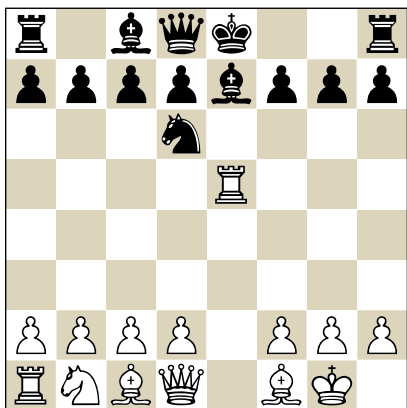
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6!?

The first real surprise of the game. In our past encounters, Anish has always preferred the Petroff.

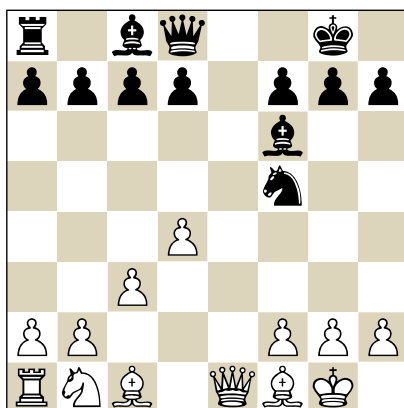
3.♗b5 ♗f6 4.0-0 ♗xe4 5.♖e1

I was really not in the mood to play the Berlin endgame, so I chose a quieter and simpler continuation. I had also noticed that both Polgar, in the Olympiad, and Kasimdzhanov, in the London Grand Prix, had obtained some very pleasant positions. Why not give it a whirl?

5...♗d6 6.♗xe5 ♗e7 7.♗f1 ♗xe5 8.♖xe5



8...0-0? 9.d4 ♗f6 10.♖e1 ♖e8 11.c3 ♖xe1 12.♗xe1 ♗f5



13.♗f4!?

Previously I had tried 13.♗d3, but it yielded me a big amount of absolutely nothing: 13...d5 14.♗f4 c6

15.♗d2 ♗h4 16.♗e2

♗f5 17.♗xf5

♗xf5 18.♗f3

♗e7 19.♖e1

♗xe2 20.

♖xe2, with

a draw in

Nakamura-

Kramnik,

Wijk aan

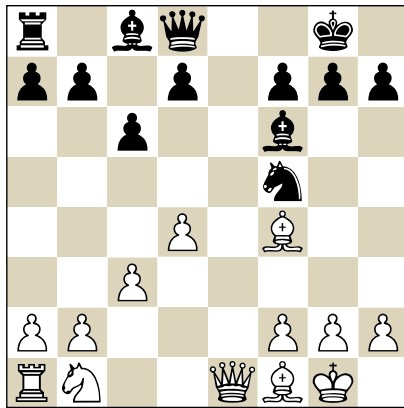
Zee 2011.

13...c6

While I am not going to claim that I knew of this line, I did suspect that

I had seen the position before. Little did I realize it was the exact same position from the 4th game between Steinitz and Zukertort in the 1886 World Championship match!

That game saw 13...d6 14.♗d2 ♗e6 15.♗d3. While the position remains equal, I slightly prefer White, due to his spatial advantage.



14.a4!?

This was an over-the-board inspiration. Around this point in the game, I started trying to envision possible endgames in which I would have winning chances. I figured that if I could get the pawn to a5, I would have possible ideas involving b4 and ♗d2-b3-c5, or even a possible a6 later on, creating a weakness on a7 should all the major pieces come off the board. After 14.♗d2 d5 15.♗f3 ♗d6 16.♗d3 ♗f5 Black has obtained equality quite easily, as was seen in Smeets-Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 2011.

14...a5?!

This natural looking move is probably still fine objectively, but it creates a weakness in both the middlegame and future endgames.

14...d6 15.♗a3!? (15.♗d3

♗e6 16.♗d2 ♗g5) 15...♗e6

16.♗c4 would lead to a different position which is

still equal but in which

White's prospects are

slightly better. Houdini

suggests 16...g5!?, but that

requires a very specific

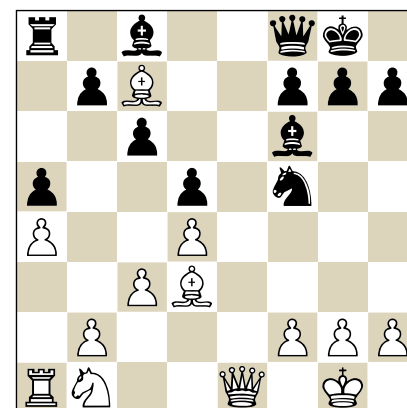
taste and understanding.

To 14...d5 White replies 15.a5,

angling for the aforementioned

endgame ideas.

15.♗c7 ♗f8 16.♗d3 d5



17.♗b6

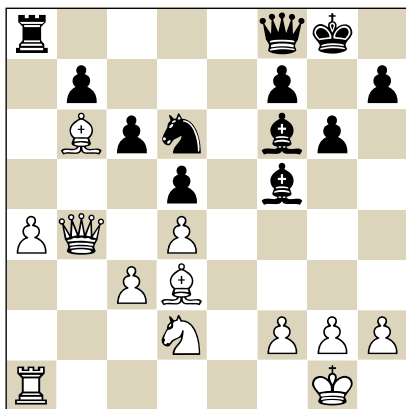
17.♗d2 is the Houdini suggestion, but I felt my move kept the game more complicated and gave Anish more chances to go wrong. Play might continue 17...g6 (in case of 17...♗d8 18.♗f4 g6 19.♗e2 ♗e6 20.♖e1 once again White is starting to create some

pressure and question the entire black set-up) 18. ♖f3 ♕e6, and Black has consolidated and will play ...♗d8 next move, with clear equality.

17...♗d6 18.♗d2

There's not much sense in 18. ♗c5 ♕e6 19. ♗d2 ♖d8. Once Black plays ...b6 and has no queenside weaknesses, he can maybe even try to fight for the initiative.

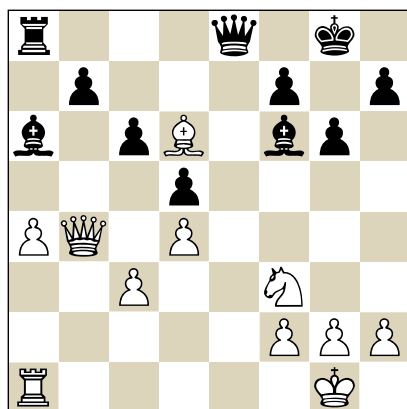
18...♕e6 19.♖b1 g6 20.b4 axb4 21.♖xb4 ♗f5



22.♗c5?!

After 22. ♗xf5 ♗xf5 23. ♗c5 ♖c8 24. ♖b1 ♗g7 25. h3 h5 26. ♗f3, Black should draw with correct play, but there is still some work left to be done.

22...♗xd3 23.♗xd6 ♖e8 24.♗f3 ♗a6 25.♗e5 ♗e7 26.♗d6 ♗f6



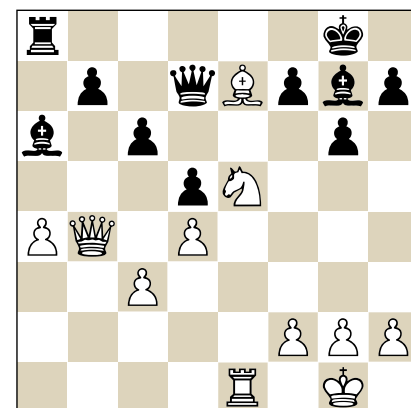
27.♖e1!?

No move repetition. I played this after a deep think. Simply put, I felt like there was enough play left without a whole lot of risk.

27...♖d7 28.♗e7

After 28. ♗e5 Black has 28... ♖e8!.

28...♗g7 29.♗e5



29...♖f5?!

Both Anish and I felt that this was the critical mistake in the game. Anish played this pretty quickly, and I wonder if in his haste he had underestimated the looming danger.

Black draws with ease after 29... ♖e6: 30. ♗d3 ♖f5 31. ♗c5 ♖e8 32. h3 ♖c2 33. ♗xa6 bxa6 34. ♖e3 ♗h6 35. ♗g5 ♖xe3 36. ♗xe3 ♗xe3 37. ♖b8+, and perpetual repetition will occur shortly.

30.♖d6 ♖e8



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- ♣ Rook Endgames 101
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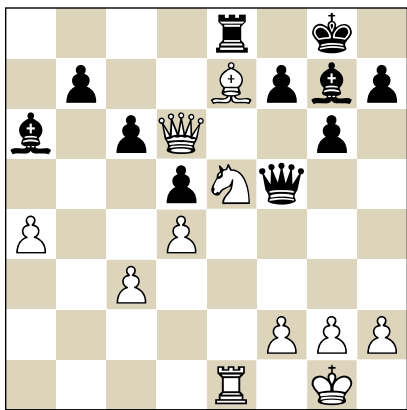
- ♣ Anand 201
- ♣ Play the Alapin Sicilian 201 NEW!
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Tournaments

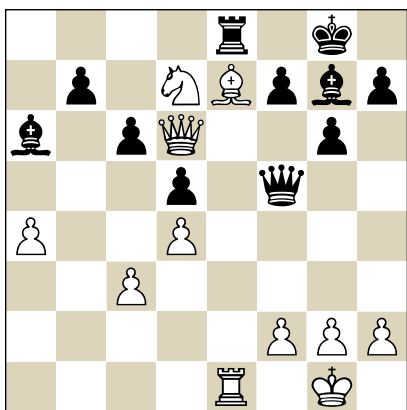
- ♣ Russian Finals 2012
- ♣ US Championship 2012
- ♣ Reggio Emilia 2012
- ♣ Dortmund 2012

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Openings · Endgames · Famous Players



31.h3? Almost immediately after I made this move, I got up from the board in anger, as I realized I had overlooked 31...♔e6. Had I seen it, I would have played the much stronger continuation 31.♘d7!. It is worth noting that it takes some time for Houdini to realize just how dangerous this idea is:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 31...♔d3? 32.h3 ♘c4 33.♔h2! ♔d2 34.♔e3 ♔xf2 35.♔g5 ♔a8 36.♔f3 ♔e1 37.♔c7 ♔e6 38.♔e3 ♔f5 39.♔xb7, winning an exchange and the game;

B) 31...h5 32.h3 ♔d3 33.♘f6+ ♔xf6 34.♔xf6 ♔f5 (after 34...♔xc3 35.♔e3 ♔c1+ 36.♔h2 Black is completely lost, as 37.♔f3 is unstoppable) 35.♔d6 ♔c4 36.♔e3, and White may not be winning yet, but with the dark-square weaknesses on the king-side, in practical terms this should be winning;

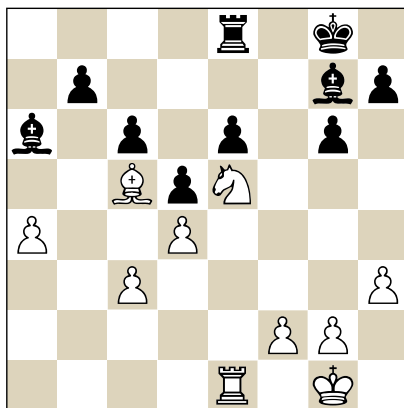
C) 31...♔c2 32.h3 ♔xc3 33.♔e3 ♔c1+ (33...♔xd4 34.♔f6 ♔d1+ 35.♔h2 is the same motif in a different order) 34.♔h2 h5 35.♘f6+ ♔xf6 36.♔xf6 ♔c8 37.♔e5, and once again,



After their game Anish Giri and Hikaru Nakamura had a lot to talk about.

the dark-square weaknesses around the king will decide the game.

31...♔e6 32.♔xe6 fxe6 33.♔c5



The smoke has cleared and we have reached an endgame. Strangely, Houdini evaluates this as completely equal. I'm pretty sure no living human being (from before 2030) would think that this ending is equal.

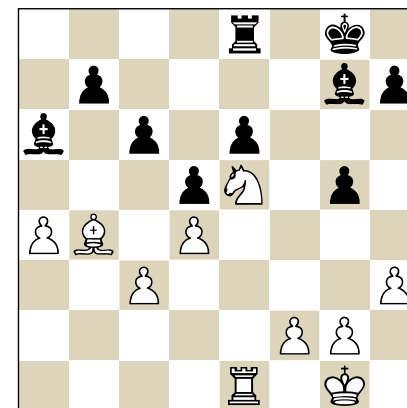
Less clear was 33.♔b4 ♔xe5 34.♔xe5 (after 34.dxe5 b6 Black draws easily since the bind on the queenside has been broken) 34...♔f7.

33...g5

Better was 33...♔xe5 34.♔xe5 (my original intention was 34.dxe5, but even with a very deep long-term plan, Black might be able to sit back and draw: 34...♔d3 35.a5 ♔a8 36.♔a1 g5 37.f3 ♔f7 38.♔f2 ♔g6 39.♔e3 ♔b5 40.♔d6 ♔f5 41.g4+ ♔g6 42.♔d4 h5 43.♔c5 ♔h8 44.♔b6 ♔h7 45.♔a2 ♔a6 46.♔f2 ♔f7, and it is not exactly

clear how White is going to break through here) 34...♔c4 35.a5 ♔f7 36.g4 ♔a8 37.♔b6 ♔f6 38.♔g2 ♔f7 39.♔g3 ♔f6, and again I do not see a clear-cut plan to make progress.

34.♔b4

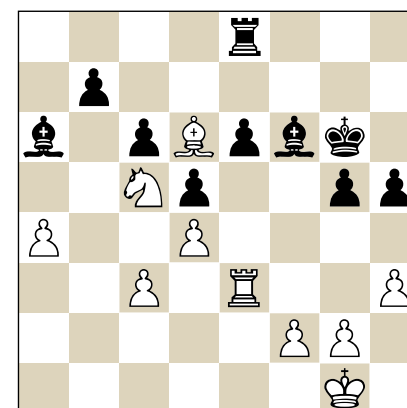


34...h6?

Missing the last opportunity to get rid of the powerful knight on e5.

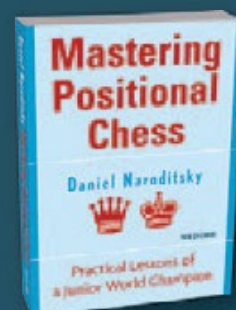
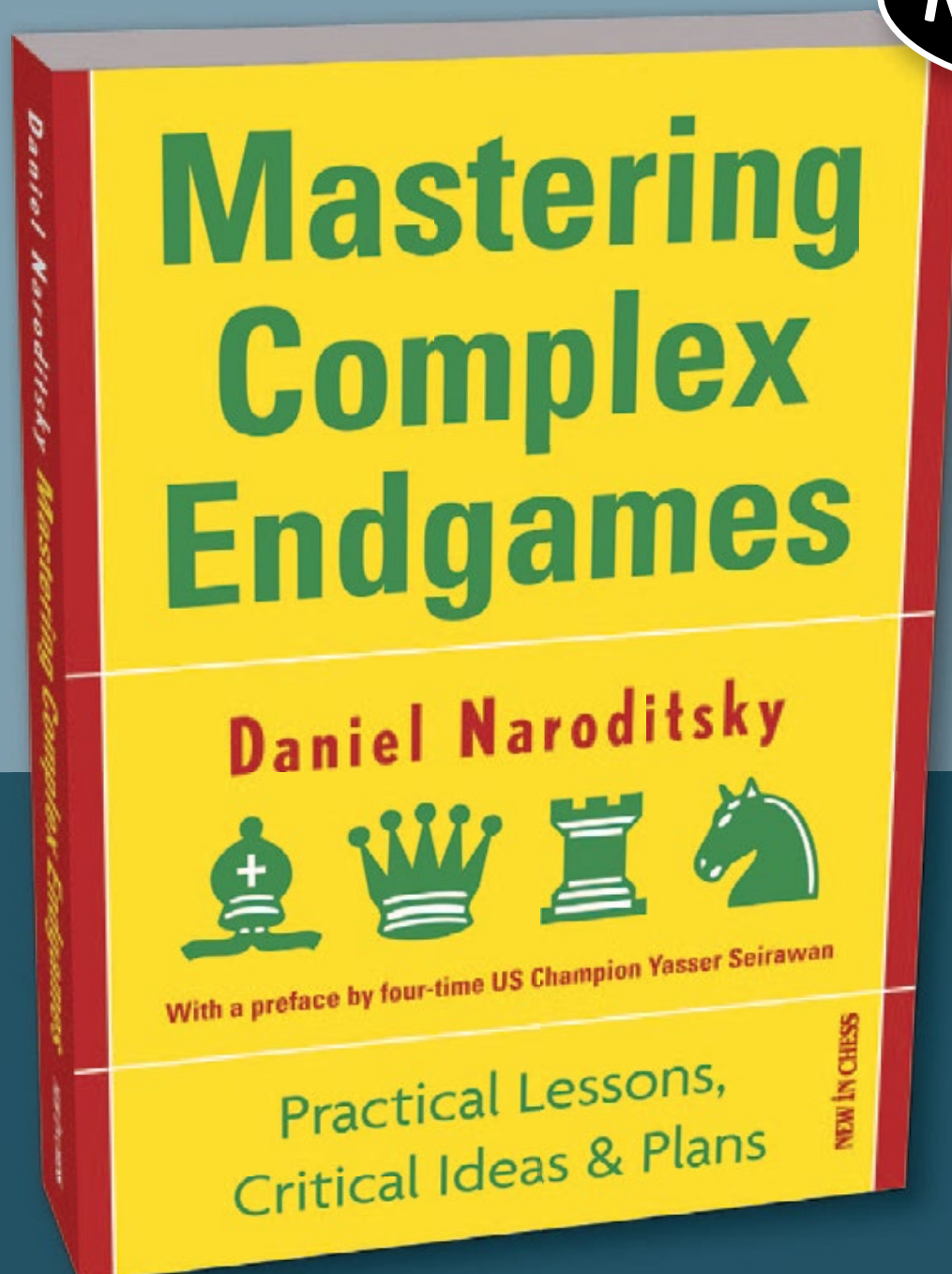
After 34...♔xe5 35.♔xe5 h6 36.a5 ♔f7 Black must be holding with the extra ...g5 and ...h6 space gaining moves being played unlike in previous variations.

35.♘d7! ♔f7 36.♔e3 ♔g6 37.♔d6 h5 38.♔c5 ♔f6



Daniel Naroditsky has done it again!

NEW!



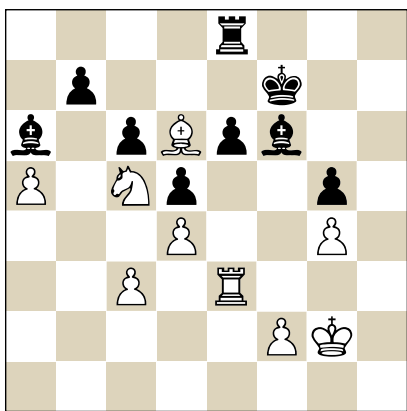
*"An excellent book .. Naroditsky really
is a mature author for his young age!"*

GM Karsten Müller,
author of 'Fundamental Chess Endings'

39.g4

After 39. ♖xe6 I was very unsure if the ensuing bishop endgames were winning: 39... ♗f7 40. ♖c5 ♖xe3 41. fxe3 g4 42. hxg4 hxg4 43. ♗f2 ♕h4+ 44. ♕g3 ♕e7 45. ♖xa6 bxa6 46. e4 ♕g5 47. ♗e2 ♗e6 48. ♗d3 ♕d8 49. c4 ♕g5, and despite the extra pawn, this endgame appears to be drawn.

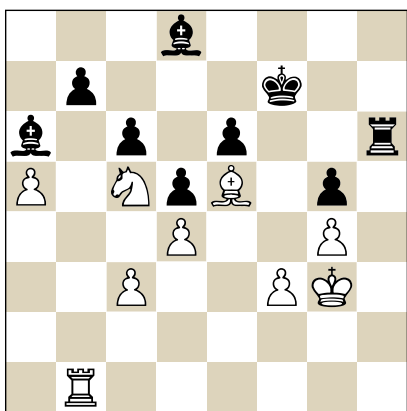
39...hxg4 40.hxg4 ♗f7 41.♗g2 ♖a8 42.a5 ♖e8



43.♖e1

After 43. ♖d7 ♕d8 44. ♖f3+ ♗g8 45. ♖f6+ ♕xf6 46. ♖xf6 ♕d3 47. ♗g3 White should be better again, but this seems much easier to defend for Black.

43...♕d8 44.♖a1 ♖h8 45.♕e5 ♖h7 46.♕d6 ♖h8 47.f3 ♖h6 48.♕e5 ♖h7 49.♗g3 ♖h6 50.♖b1



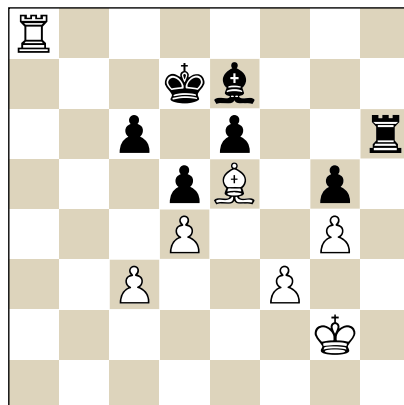
50...♕xa5 51.♖xb7 ♕xb7 52.♖xb7+ ♗e8 53.♖g7 ♕d8 54.♗g2?! Trying to be too precise and to avoid any counterplay.

Similar to the game was 54. ♖g8+ ♗d7 55. f4 gxf4+ 56. ♕xf4 ♖h1 57. g5, except I would not have wasted a bunch of tempos!

54...♕e7 55.♖g8+ ♗d7 56.♖a8?

Another inexplicable move. At this

point, I was getting tired and low on time and I simply forgot Anish could push his c-pawn!



56...c5! 57.♖g8 cxd4?!

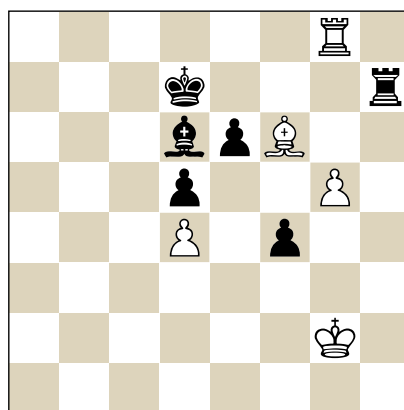
He should have played 57...c4 58. f4 ♖h4 59. ♗g3 gxf4+ 60. ♕xf4 ♖h1 61. ♗g2 ♖b1 62. g5 ♕d6 63. ♖g7+ ♗c6 64. ♕xd6 ♗xd6 65. g6 ♖b8 66. ♗f3 e5, and this draws without any relative danger.

58.cxd4 ♖h7 59.f4 gxf4?

A further inaccuracy. After 59... ♖h4 60. ♗g3 gxf4+ 61. ♕xf4 ♖h1 62. g5 ♕d6! Black easily holds a draw.

60.g5 ♕d6 61.♕f6?

The wrong order! Correct was 61. g6 ♖h5 62. ♕f6 f3+ 63. ♗f2, and the g6-pawn rules the day.

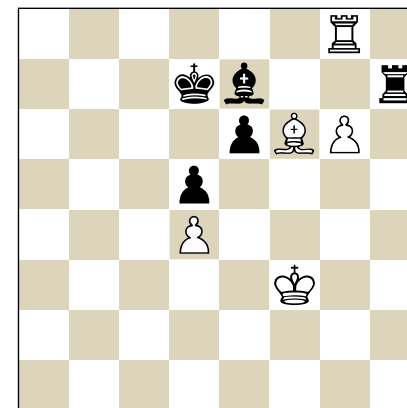


61...♕e7?

The final mistake. Black should have gone 61...f3+ 62. ♗xf3 ♖h4! 63. ♗g2 ♖h2+ 64. ♗g1 ♖h4 65. g6 ♖f4 66.

♖d8+ ♗c7 67. g7 ♖g4+ 68. ♗f2 ♕e7! 69. g8 ♖ (69. ♕xe7 ♖xg7 70. ♕h4 ♖g4 71. ♖h8 ♖xd4 is a theoretically drawn position) 69... ♖xg8 70. ♖xg8 ♕xf6 71. ♗e3 e5, reaching another theoretical draw.

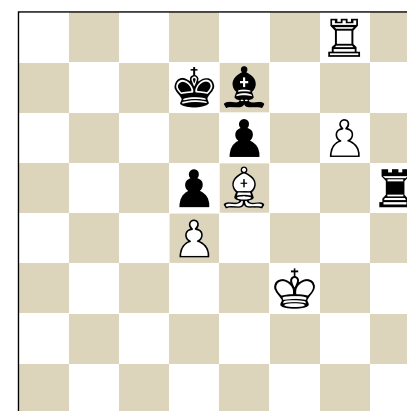
62.g6 f3+ 63.♗xf3



63...♖h5

In case of 63... ♖h3+ 64. ♗g4 ♕xf6 65. ♗xh3 ♗e7 66. ♖b8 ♕xd4 67. ♖b7+ ♗f8 68. ♗g4 ♗g8 69. ♗g5 ♕c3 70. ♖e7 e5 71. ♖c7 ♕d4 72. ♖d7, I simply pick off the d- and e-pawns and then it is a well-known theoretically winning position.

64.♕e5



Anish resigned here, as the pawn on g6 cannot be stopped without sacrificing considerable material: 64... ♕f6 65. ♕xf6 ♖f5+ 66. ♗e2 ♖xf6 67. g7 ♖g6 68. ♖a8 ♖xg7 69. ♖a7+, winning the rook and the game. ■

Hooegeveen 2012

				cat. XVIII					
				1	2	3	4	TPR	
1	Hikaru Nakamura	IGM	USA 2786	* *	½ 1	1 ½	1 ½	4½	2858
2	Sergey Tiviakov	IGM	NED 2659	½ 0	* *	½ ½	½ 1	3	2707
3	Anish Giri	IGM	NED 2730	0 ½	½ ½	* *	½ ½	2½	2626
4	Hou Yifan	IGM	CHN 2605	0 ½	½ 0	½ ½	* *	2	2600

Not a genius, but what a great player!

His imposing career spans more than half a century. In 1951 Borislav Ivkov won the Junior World Championship, in 2006 he became Senior European Champion. For many years he belonged to the world elite, counting greats such as Fischer, Petrosian, Tal, Smyslov and Bronstein among his victims. In Yugoslavia he was the firm number two after the legendary Svetozar Gligoric. Earlier this year Ivkov (79) published a book on his career in Serbo-Croat, *My 60 Years in Chess*. Inspired by this retrospective, **Ivan Sokolov** shares his memories of Ivkov and takes a critical look at his massive body of work.



Mar del Plata 1955. Borislav Ivkov meets Miss Mar del Plata, 19-year-old Olga Kesic. Four years later he returned to marry her.

W

When I was preparing this article and going through my database, I was surprised that I no longer remembered Ivkov's participation in the Sarajevo tournament in 1986, where I was a board boy. Perhaps this memory lapse was not all that strange, since no fewer than nine of his games were 15-move draws!

The first time I met Ivkov over the board was in 1984, in two open tournaments in Bugojno and Thessaloniki. I was 16, which at that time was

considered young, and rated around 2250. I lost both games, making crucial mistakes in equal positions in Ivkov's time-trouble. Nine years later, in 1993, when he was already 60, we played a game in Oviedo, which I won. In short, I did not have the opportunity to play Ivkov at the right time: either I was too young or he was too old.

During his tenure as Yugoslav team coach from 1988 to 1990 I had other dealings with him. In 1988 I was national champion, had won the Biel tournament and was invited to play at the Olympiad in Thessaloniki. Ivkov was a person with defined, mostly not very flex-

ible, opinions, who craved authority. I was 20 years old and had my own ideas about pretty much everything. This combination did not work out well, to put it mildly!

'In short, I did not have the opportunity to play Ivkov at the right time: either I was too young or he was too old.'

At the start of 1989, the general opinion in the Yugoslav Chess Federation was that the national championship should involve all the strongest players. There was just one small problem; there was no money and no sponsorship. At that point a politician had a 'bright' idea: we should be forced to participate in the national cham-

pionship or risk being banned for a year from participating anywhere! Ivkov fully supported this bright and

innovative plan and shortly afterwards we received our ‘invitations’, written in Politburo style, to participate in the championship. When I was served such an ‘invitation’, I refused point-blank to participate, and so did, as expected, the two highest-rated players, Ljubojevic and Nikolic. Some months of deliberation followed until the federation ‘forgot’ about the threatened sanctions.

At the end of 1989 the Investbanka tournament in Belgrade coincided with the European team championship in Haifa. As various top players (Ljubojevic, Nikolic, Kozul and Damljanovic) were playing in Belgrade, Ivkov called me and, much to my surprise, asked if I wanted to play Board 1 for Yugoslavia in Haifa. The tournament went well, my play was OK, the team won silver (behind the Soviets) and our relations improved. When, in 1990, I was doing my military service, Ivkov was very supportive and urged the federation to contact the military authorities to grant me leave to participate in the Balkan championships in Kavala, where I played Board 1 and we won, and the Olympiad in Novi Sad, where I played Board 1 for the B-team.

Earlier this year Boris Ivkov published an autobiographical book entitled *My 60 Years in Chess*, which for the moment is only available in Serbo-Croat. It’s a good read, written by someone with a broad chess knowledge. Besides his own games, he includes many games and examples from other players. Advanced chess players will read it with pleasure, while amateurs will find a lot of instructional material.

The only irritating aspect of the book is Ivkov’s attempt to paint himself as a genius. He may even think that he is, but... he definitely is not. He is a great player with a lot of knowledge and talent, but he is not as brilliant as he would like to present himself. Throughout the book, he repeats

over and over again that he has never worked, prepared or studied. Apparently, he was more or less born clever! A natural genius! Playing all sorts of different openings against the world’s very best, without doing any work – just by having been born clever!

In general this is what I would call the Yugoslav syndrome. I only remember it all too well, and fortunately the younger generation is better! In my time you’d hear ‘those people sitting there, Polugaevsky, Gelfand, Khalifman, Gurevich, Bareev..., they have no talent at all. A bunch of bookish morons! No talent at all! But me! If I had worked...’

Let me give you a telling example from Ivkov’s book. In the chapter ‘Preparation’, Ivkov really takes his time trying to convince the reader that he was a born genius, who always understood things without any work! This makes me wonder why, with so much talent, he always remained in the shadow of Gligoric who, contrary to Borislav, always spoke openly about his work and his professionalism and never claimed to have been born clever. The following game comments show Ivkov’s arrogance. Ivkov: ‘The times of Lasker, Capablanca, to a considerable extent the younger Reshevsky and Najdorf, who did not follow opening theory closely – contrary to Alekhine or Fischer – have disappeared forever. Today it is difficult to imagine a chess player who hours before the game will not spend his time at his laptop checking databases, etc. Therefore the complaint of Dragan Solak (a young Serbian 2600 GM) does not come as a surprise that in the Moscow Aeroflot Open he had only four hours to prepare for each game. Now, even though Reshevsky and Najdorf were considered natural talents who could

fight the world’s best players, even the Soviets, I am not sure about this ‘established truth’. It is very likely that at home they worked seriously, following the latest theoretical developments. (Naturally, Ivkov explains that

people like Reshevsky or Najdorf could not have made it solely on the strength of their natural talent, but he, Ivkov, of course could!) In that regard, there is only one player in the world that I am convinced has worked even less than me: Zivojin Ljubisavljevic (a Serbian master – I.S.) nick-

named Zika Tal... Thinking back to my ‘preparation’ I can say that the games I properly prepared for can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Going to a game against Timman I visited Velimirovic in his room for 30 minutes, because I felt Timman would play the Alekhine Defence...’

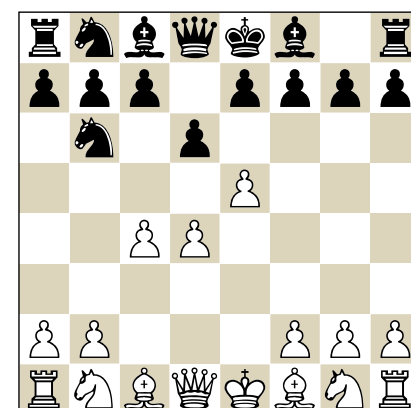
AL 8.2 – B03

Borislav Ivkov

Jan Timman

Amsterdam IBM 1974 (6)

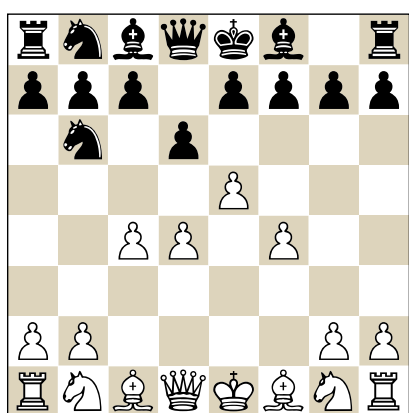
1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘d5 3.d4 d6 4.c4 ♘b6



5.f4

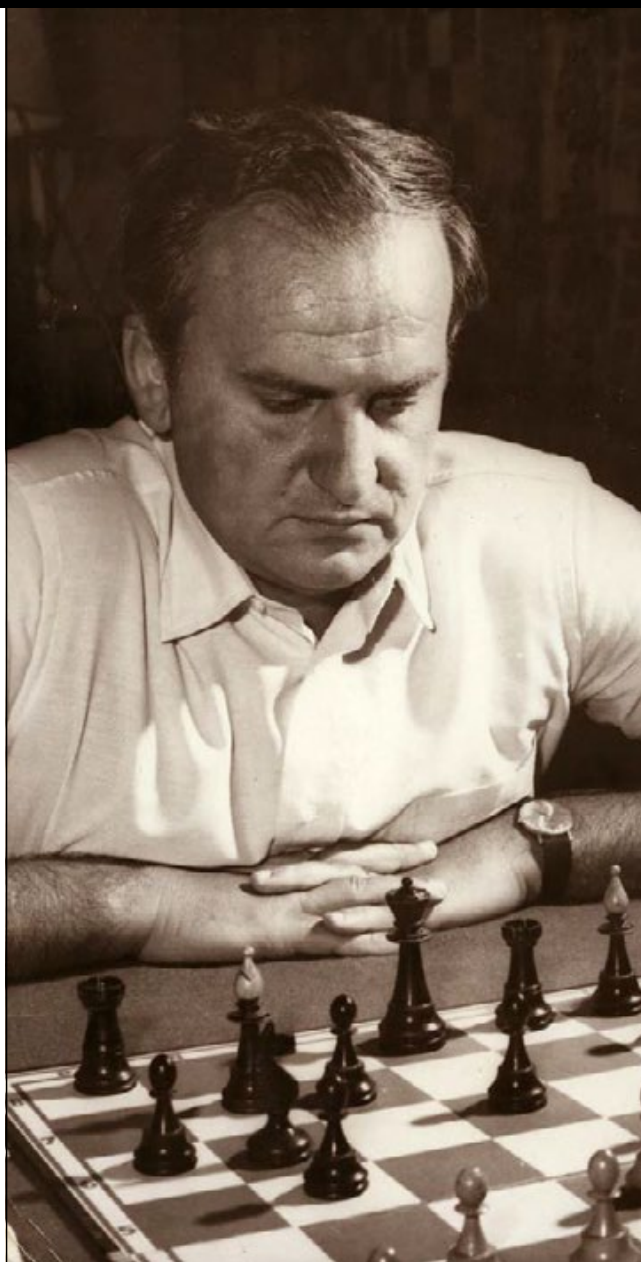
Ivkov: ‘!! The double exclamation to this move is only for this game. Once I asked Larsen about the most dangerous weapon against the Alekhine Defence and he replied: the Four Pawns Attack. Out of curiosity I then asked

him why he played the Alekhine himself, and he responded by saying: But who plays the Four Pawns nowadays? And now we are in the situation that Timman could not have expected this variation from me. No, Timman could not even have dreamed of it! (At the time Timman was already a renowned GM and theoretician – I.S.) Velimirovic and I had the habit where I would come to his room, wake him up, and we would go to the round. This time I got to his room slightly earlier and asked him to explain to me in the simplest possible manner his idea in this line. Some years earlier I, together with Ljubojevic, had been a second of Milunka Lazarevic (perhaps the best female player in Yugoslav history – I.S.) for her match against Alexandria. Milunka had forgotten to bring Velimirovic's analyses, while Ljubo and I failed to find the right (Velimirovic's) idea. (Now suddenly Ivkov admits to have analysed this variation extensively with Ljubo, who was already one of the world's leading players – I.S.) So my preparation for this game was, as I have explained, very 'long'; it lasted 20 minutes!



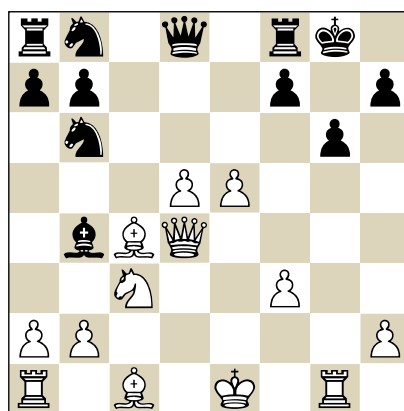
5...d5

In 1973, Ljubo, who was Yugoslavia's hope to reach the Candidates' at the time, lost a spectacular game to Bronstein in the Interzonal. This game (and, as a result, the Four Pawns against the Alekhine) was widely analysed in Yugoslavia. A detail Ivkov 'forgets' to mention. That game saw 5...dxe5 6.fxe5 c5 (modern theory mostly follows 6...dxc6 7.dxe3 d5 8.dxc3 e6 etc.) 7.d5 e6 8.dxc3 exd5 9.



Borislav Ivkov: 'My preparation for this game was very "long"; it lasted 20 minutes!'

cx d5 c4 (Ljubojevic's strategy looks rather risky – to put it mildly!) 10.d f3 d g4 11.d d4 d xf3 12.gxf3 d b4 13.d xc4 0-0 14.f g1 g6 (true to his style, Bronstein goes for an intuitive sacrifice)



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

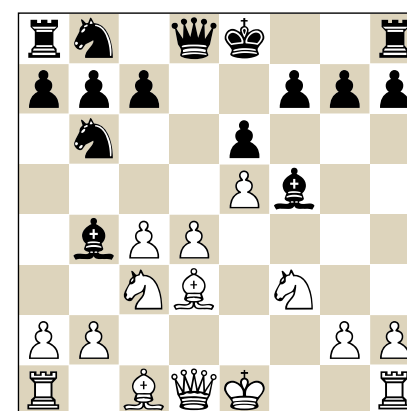
15.d g5 d c7 16.d b3 d c5 17.d f4 d xg1 18.d6 d c8 19.d e2 (19.0-0-0 also yields White a strong attack) 19...d c5 20.d e4 d 8d7 21.f c1 d c6 22.f xc5! d xc5 23.d f6+ d h8

24.d h4 d b5+ 25.d e3 h5 26.d xh5 d xb3+ 27.axb3 d d5+ 28.d d4 d e6+ 29.d xd5 d xg5 30.d f6+ d g7 31.d xg5, and White soon won, Bronstein-Ljubojevic, Petropolis 1973.

6.d c3 e6 7.d f3 dxe5 8.fxe5 d b4 Ivkov: 'This is the move that I and Ljubo had no reply to'

9.d d3

Ivkov: 'And this is Velimirovic's idea.'



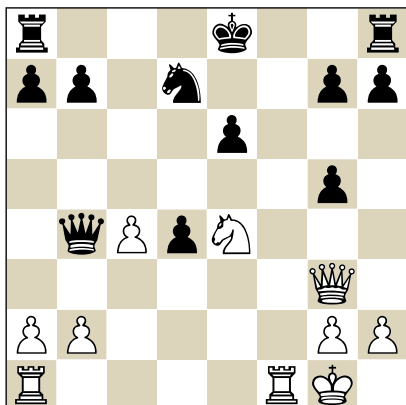
9...d xd3 Ivkov: 'Better is 9...c5!? 10.d xf5 exf5 11.d5 (after 11.d g5 d d7 12.0-0 0-0?! – for better or for worse, Black probably had to take 12...cx d4 – 13.d5 the white pawn centre is too strong: 13...d xc4 14.d e2 d xc3 15.d xc4 d xb2 16.f ab1 d d4+ 17.d xd4 cxd4 18.e6 fxe6 19.dxe6, and White went on to win in Morozevich-Bagirov, Moscow 1995 – I.S.) 11...d xc4 12.0-0, with an unclear game that I was supposedly ready for.'

The above-mentioned game of Velimirovic continued 9...d g4 10.0-0 d c6 11.c5 d xc3 12.bxc3 d d5 13.d e1 d de7 14.f b1 f b8 15.d g5 d f5 16.d xf5 d xf5 17.d e4 d d7 18.d5 d ce7 19.c4 c6 20.d6 d g6 21.g4 d h6 22.f b3 0-0 23.f bf3 b6 24.h4 f fe8 25.d xh7 d xh4 26.f h3, 1-0, Velimirovic-Martz, Vrnjacka Banja 1973. In 1974 information travelled slowly. Timman obviously did not know of the Velimirovic game and was terribly outprepared by Ivkov's '20 minutes of work!' **10.d xd3 c5 11.0-0! cxd4 12.d e4** 'White gets a tremendous attack.'

12...d 6d7 13.d fg5

Ivkov: 'I no longer remember whether I was still following the analyses. However, the position is now very easy and plays itself.'

13...♖xe5 14.♔g3 ♘bd7 15.♙f4
♙b6 16.♙xe5 f6 17.♙d6 fxg5 18.
♙xb4 ♔xb4



19.♙d6+ 'The black king is a disaster.'
19...♔e7 20.♙f7+ ♔d8 21.♙xg5+
♔c7 22.♙b5+ ♔c8 23.♙af1 b6
24.♙xd7 ♔xd7 25.♙xg7+
Black resigned.

Borislav Ivkov rose to chess prominence in 1951, when in Birmingham he won the first Junior World Championship. In the next two decades he would be one of the leading players in the world and the second player in his country, constantly challenging Gligoric's top position in Yugoslav chess. Perhaps it was a psychological complex that caused his bad score against the 10 year older Gligoric. As far as I could ascertain, Gliga had an overall score of +8 against Ivkov and it was only in 1965 that he lost to him for the first time.

The first time Ivkov participated in the Yugoslav championship, in 1949 at the tender age of 16, he shared 4th-7th place (Gligoric won). In the years that followed his versatile style and broad opening knowledge developed further to be the keys to his successes.

His international breakthrough came in 1955, when he travelled to Argentina and won two strong grandmaster events in Mar del Plata and Buenos Aires.

Mar del Plata also marked another key moment in his life. As if they had a sixth sense, the organizers asked 19-year-old Olga Kesic to hand the trophy to the promising winner. Olga was the daughter of Yugoslav immigrants.

One month before the tournament she had been voted Miss Mar del Plata. In the photo of the prize-giving it is clear for everyone to see that the young chess grandmaster is impressed by the beautiful young woman and four years later, at the end of a tour of South America, Ivkov returned to Argentina and married Olga. Their happiness ended when Olga tragically passed away in 1975, leaving Ivkov behind with their 13-year-old son Boris.

The crucial moments in Ivkov's career arrived in the mid-60s. In 1964 he qualified for the Candidates' matches at the Amsterdam Interzonal. It is fair to mention that qualifying for the Candidates' was much easier at the time. The Soviet Union was still 'in one piece' and there was a limit on the number of Soviet players that could qualify for the Candidates'. As a result, Leonid Stein and David Bronstein were stopped from proceeding to the Candidates' and their places were taken by Ivkov and Portisch, even though they finished behind both Soviets in Amsterdam. Ivkov's performance in Amsterdam was not too brilliant. Against the top-10 players he only gathered 4½ points, but he made a true killing against the bottom seven players, scoring 6½ points. His opponent in the Candidates' match of the following year was Bent Larsen.

The year 1965 started with his best result ever, a brilliant victory in Zagreb. After losing his first round game to Portisch, Ivkov won nine games in the tournament, including his first victory ever against Gligoric and a win against Larsen, to finish shared first with Uhlmann, ahead of Petrosian, Larsen, Portisch, Bronstein and Gligoric.

He had every reason to be optimistic about the coming Candidates' match against Larsen. Ivkov's play in those years was very universal. He could play many different positions with a high level of understanding. His opening knowledge was broad, he played almost all the openings

with black and both 1.e4 and 1.d4 with white. This broad knowledge was married to deep opening preparation aimed at one specific player. In this field he was ahead of his time and he was a difficult player to prepare for. Furthermore, he had an excellent positional sense with a good feel for the initiative and a sharp eye for tactics. I think that the closest comparison to his style is that of Paul Keres.

A couple of months before he sadly passed away, I called Svetozar Gligoric to ask him a few questions about his greatest Yugoslav rival. Gligo said: 'Bora had a great talent to manoeuvre with his knights against his opponent's bishops. He played excellently in the mid-60s and I occasionally let him play Board 1 on the national team.'

In 1965, in the European team championship in Hamburg, Ivkov played ahead of Gligoric in the Yugoslav team for the first (and only) time.

I had not noticed this excellent play with his knights versus bishops, but Gligo was right. Have a look for yourself at two of Ivkov's games against Bobby Fischer. The almighty Robert James was swept off the board twice, both times as Black, with remarkable ease. Very, very few players have been able to demolish Fischer and teach him a positional lesson without giving him a chance.

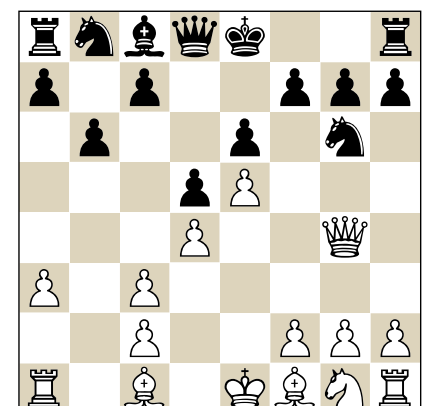
FR 9.1 – C16

Robert James Fischer

Borislav Ivkov

Santiago de Chile 1959 (3)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.
e5 ♘e7 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 b6
7.♔g4 ♘g6



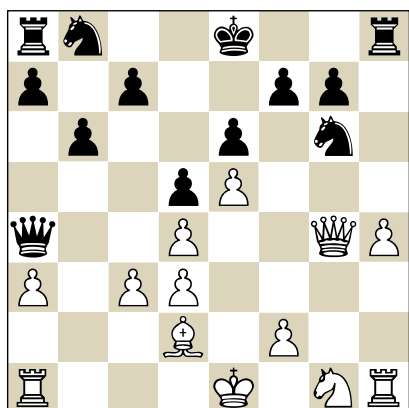
8.♔g5 Modern theory advocates the immediate 8.h4, although Black is doing well. An interesting recent top-level game continued 8...h5 9.♖d1 ♖d7 10.♙e2 (White is to collect the black pawn on h5, but this is going to cost him precious time) 10...♙a6 11.♙xh5 ♖b5 12.♔d2 ♜f4 13.♙f3 c5 14.♙e3 (a 'well developed' king on e3 on a board full of pieces is normally not a good idea) 14...♜g6 15.h5 ♖a5 16.♙b2 ♜c6 17.g4 ♜ge7 18.♜e2 ♖a4 (the black queen on a4 is excellently placed in this line) 19.♔d2 cxd4 20.cxd4 ♙xe2 21.♙xe2 ♜xd4 22.♙d3 ♜c8 23.f3 ♜ec6 24.♙e3 (the unfortunate white king returns to its 'active' spot) 24...♙e7 25.♜e1 g6 26.c4 ♖a5! 27.cxd5?! ♖xd5 28.♙e4 ♖xe5 29.♜c1 ♜hd8 30.hxg6 f5 31.♜xc6 ♜xc6 32.♙xd4 ♜xd4 33.♖xd4 ♜c3+ 34.♖xc3 ♖xc3+ 0-1, Zhigalko-Riazantsev, Rogaska Slatina 2011.

8.a4 was recently played by Kamsky, amongst others preventing the black ...♖d7-a4 plan.

8...♖d7 9.h4 h6 10.♙d2 h5 11.♖f3 ♖a4

A standard French plan for Black.

12.♙d3 ♙a6 13.g4 hxg4 14.♖xg4 ♙xd3 15.cxd3



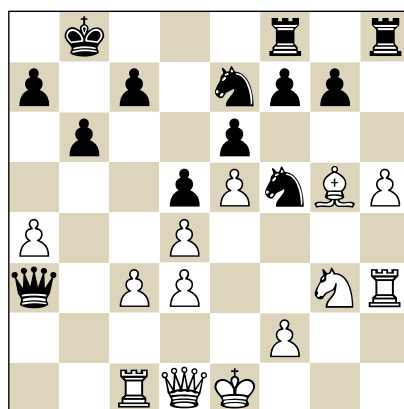
15...♜c6! Black is already (considerably) better (there is also the immediate ...♜cxe5 threat).

16.♖g5 ♜ce7 17.h5 ♜f5 18.♜e2 ♜ge7 White has numerous pawn weaknesses and no active play. The game is positionally (more or less) won for Black.

19.♜g3 0-0-0 20.♖g4 ♜df8 21.♜h3 ♙b8 22.♙g5 ♖c2 23.♜c1 ♖b2 24.a4 ♖a3 25.♖d1



Those were the days. Aleksandar Matanovic, Svetozar Gligoric, Borislav Milic and Borislav Ivkov.



White has prevented immediate material losses, but his king remains in the centre and his pawn weaknesses remain easy targets. To 'compensate' for all these problems White has not a single active idea and is doomed to passivity.

25...♜xg3 26.fxg3 ♜c6

The threat is ...f6, opening up the centre to get to the white king still stuck on e1 (the immediate 26...f6 was also good).

27.h6 gxh6 28.♙f6 ♜hg8 29.♙f2 ♜g6

White has prevented Black's f6 break, but at the cost of a pawn.

30.♖c2 ♜fg8 31.♜b1 ♖f8

Hoping to create some sort of play, White gives another pawn.

32.a5 ♜xa5 33.♖a4 ♙a8 34.♜b5 ♖e8 35.c4 ♜c6 36.♖a1

36.cxd5 exd5 37.♜xd5?? is a blunder because of 37...♖e6.

36...dxc4 37.dxc4 ♖d7

White could have safely resigned here.

38.c5 ♖xd4+ 39.♖xd4 ♜xd4 40.♜b4 ♜f5 41.c6 ♜g4 42.♜xg4 ♜xg4 43.♜h1 a5 44.♜g1 a4 45.♜d1 ♜d4 46.♜g1 ♜d2+ 47.♙f3 ♜d3+ 48.♙f4 ♜xg3 49.♜c1 ♜d3 50.♙g4 a3 51.♜a1 b5 52.♜b1 a2

White resigned. A terrible loss for Fischer. He was positionally outplayed, almost like an amateur playing a GM.

RL 23.10 – C96

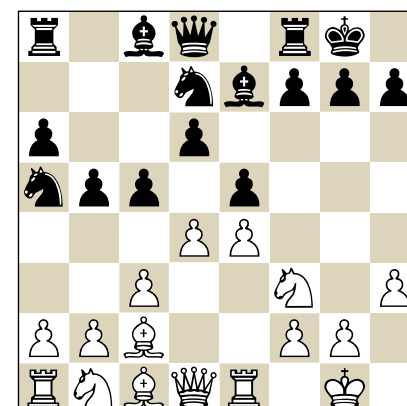
Robert James Fischer

Borislav Ivkov

Havana Capablanca Memorial 1965 (10)

In the tournament of his life, Ivkov repeated his feat from 1959 and taught Fischer another positional lesson!

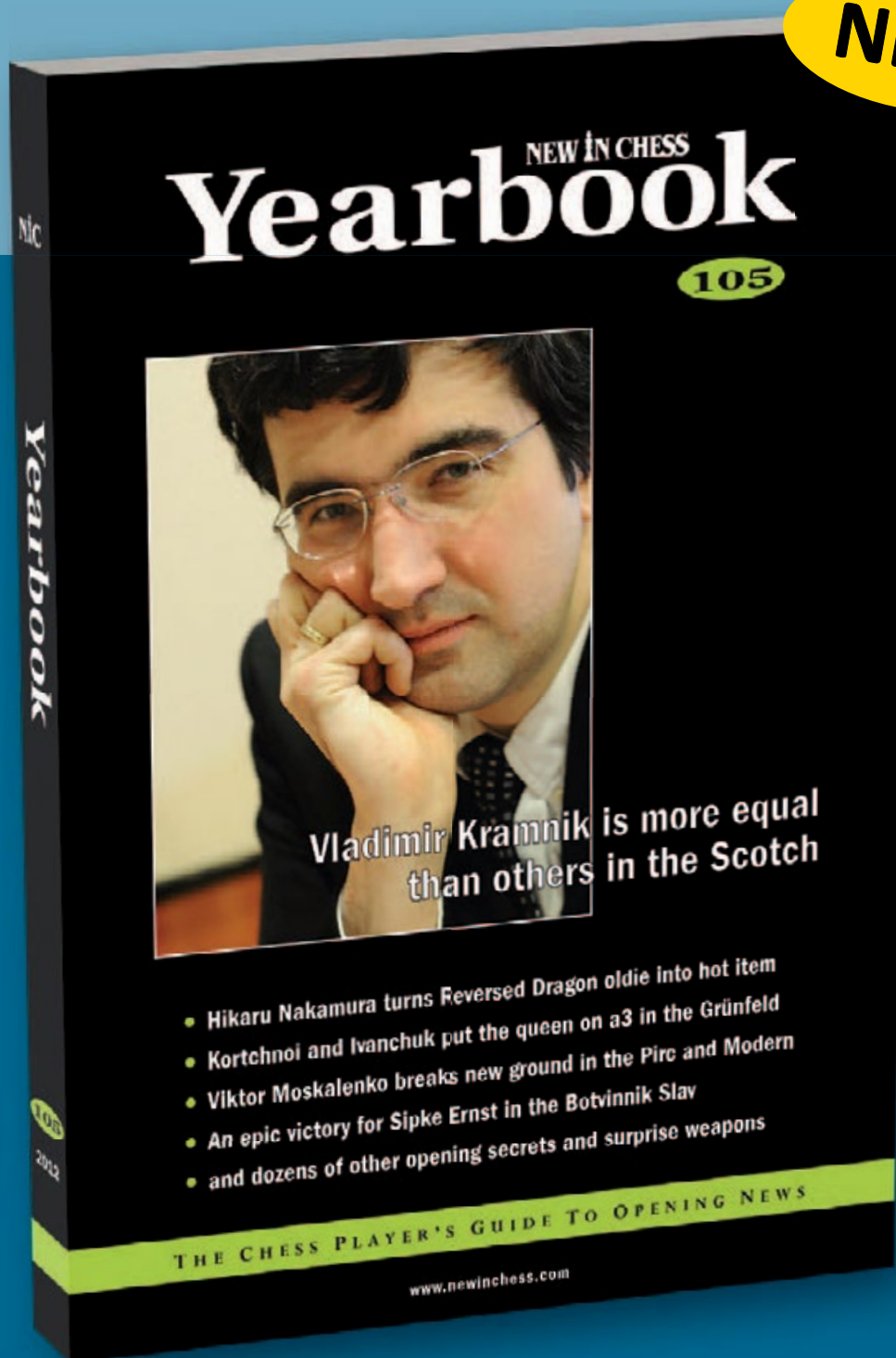
1.e4 e5 2.♜f3 ♜c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♜f6 5.0-0 ♙e7 6.♜e1 b5 7.♙b3 0-0 8.c3 d6 9.h3 ♜a5 10.♙c2 c5 11.d4 ♜d7



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- What little queen move put Peter Svidler in trouble in the 4.e3 Grünfeld?
- What great novelty by Hikaru Nakamura gave the Reversed Dragon a new lease of life?
- Is Magnus Carlsen's queenside castling plan in the Classical Scotch emasculated?
- Is Gata Kamsky's 6.a4 against the Najdorf really so timid?
- Is Paul Keres's invention 5.♘b3 the best reaction to the Delayed Cozio Variation?
- Is Bent Larsen's 5...♘c3 as weird as it looks in the Symmetrical English?
- Does Vassily Smyslov's ...e6 harmonize with Carl Schlechter's 4...g6 in the Slav?
- What is the best way to fight Vladimir Kramnik's 12.♘f3 in the Bayonet King's Indian?
- Do we have a final verdict on Nana Alexandria's 12.♔d2 in the Exchange Grünfeld, 30 years after her match with Maia Chiburdanidze?
- Is Andras Adorjan's crazy 4...f5 possible against the Centre Game?
- Is d2-d3 against the Ruy Lopez as toothless as everybody thinks?

12.dxc5 Modern theory does not consider this White's best choice. White has tried almost all legal moves, including Kramnik's 12.♔h1!?

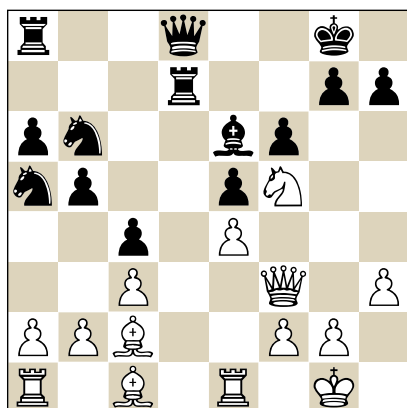
12...dxc5 13.♘bd2 f6 14.♘h4 ♘b6 15.♘f5 ♗f7 16.♘xe7+

The position being relatively closed, the white bishop pair will prove to be of no particular significance.

In more recent games White has opted to keep his knight on f5, playing either 16.♗g4 or 16.♘b3.

16...♗xe7 17.♗f3 ♘e6 18.♘f1 ♗d7 19.♘e3 c4 20.♘f5

Another white knight has arrived on a dominant square (and will be exchanged in due time).



20...♘a4! 21.♘xa4 bxa4

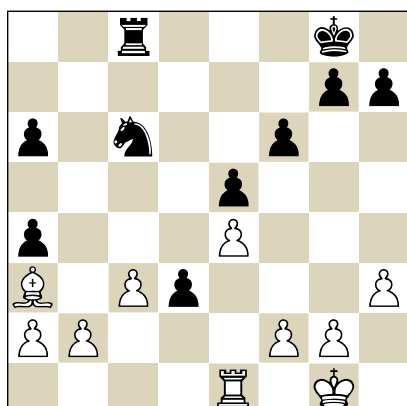
Now White has the weakness of the d3-square in his camp.

22.♘e3 ♗d3 23.♗g4 ♗d7 24.♘c5 ♗c8 25.♘e7 ♘xf5 26.♗xf5 ♘c6 27.♘c5

Fischer, like many great champions, loved bishops. However, in this particular position the black knight will turn out to be superior.

27...♘d8 Also good is 27...♗xf5 28. exf5 g6 29. fxg6 hxg6 30. ♗e4 ♘b8 31. ♘a3 ♘d7, with ...f5 to follow.

28.♗xd7 ♗xd7 29.♗ad1 ♗d3 30. ♘a3 ♘c6 31.♗xd3 cxd3

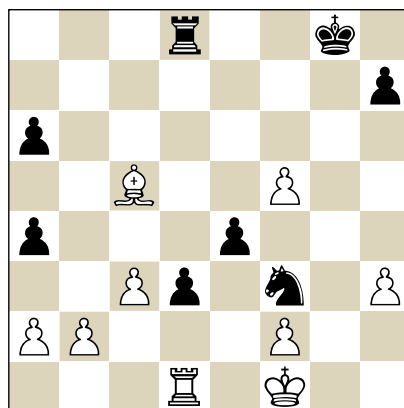


The answer to the question of whether the d3-pawn is an asset or a weakness will determine the outcome of the game.

32.♗d1 ♗d8 33.♘f1 g6 34.g4 f5! 35.gxf5 gxf5 36.exf5 e4

The strong black d-passer is well defended and White will fail to solve this problem.

37.♘e1 ♘e5 38.♘c5 ♘f3+ 39.♘f1



39...♘f7 Black has the powerful d3-pawn and the white king is in a mating net. Fischer has been positionally outplayed by Ivkov again!

40.♘g2 ♗g8+ 41.♘h1 ♗g1+

Probably the simplest win. White loses a piece.

42.♗xg1 ♘xg1 43.♘e3 ♘f3

The game has been decided. Fischer plods on in a totally lost position (just like in their 1959 game) for another 10 moves.

44.♘g2 d2 45.♘xd2 ♘xd2

46.♘g3 ♘f6 47.♘f4 h5 48.♘e3 ♘f3 49.♘xe4 ♘g5+ 50.♘f4 ♘xh3+ 51.♘g3 ♘g5 52.♘h4 ♘xf5 53.♘xh5 ♘e4 White resigned.

In 1968 Ivkov defeated reigning World Champion Tigran Petrosian with equal ease. The flow of Ivkov's play is logical and harmonious.

SI 39.9 – B44

Borislav Ivkov

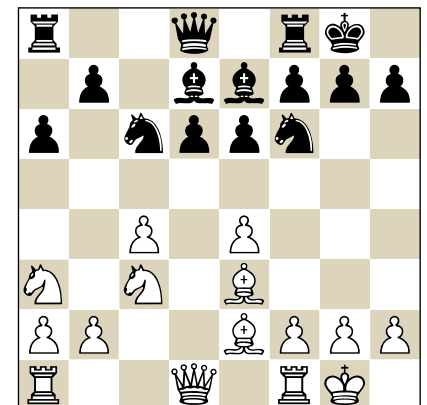
Tigran Petrosian

Palma de Mallorca 1968 (6)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 e6 5.♘b5 d6 6.c4 ♘f6 7. ♘1c3 a6 8.♘a3 ♘e7 9.♘e2 0-0 10.0-0 ♘d7

Nowadays the development of the c8-bishop to b7 is considered a must.

11.♘e3



11...♗b8 An interesting idea of Boleslavsky's worked out fine a year earlier (although for some reason it did not find any followers!): 11...♗a5 12.♗e1 ♗fb8!? 13.f3 b5! (this pawn sacrifice is the point of Boleslavsky's idea. In case of 13...♘b4 14.♗c1 b5 15.♗f2 the black knight on b4 stands in the way of the black b-pawn) 14.cxb5 axb5 15.♘axb5 ♘b4 16.♘d4 e5! 17.♘b3 ♗d8 18.♗d2 ♘e6 19.a3, ½-½, Geller-Boleslavsky, Moscow 1967.

12.f3 ♘d8 13.♗d2 ♘c7 14.♘h1 b6

The black bishop proves to be passive on d7.

15.♗fd1 Petrosian is not getting counterplay, whereas Ivkov improves his position, claiming more space.

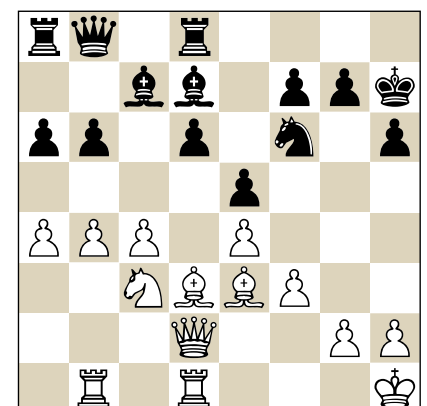
15...♘e8 16.♘c2 ♘e7 17.♘d4 ♘c6 18.a4 ♘xd4

This trade will not help Black.

19.♗xd4 h6 20.b4 ♘f6 21.♗d2 ♘h7

Black was worried about ♘xh6 motifs, but on h7 the black king will find itself threatened by tactics on the b1-h7 diagonal.

22.♗ab1 ♗d8 23.♘d3 e5



Now there follows a standard break in this type of positions and files are opened in White's favour.

24.c5! bxc5 25.bxc5 ♖c8 26. ♜d5 ♙xa4 27.cxd6

Probably more precise was 27.♞dc1!, and Black does not have a good reply. White wins an exchange after 27... ♙c6 28.♜e7 ♖d7 29.cxd6 ♖xd6 30. ♜xc6 ♖xd3 31.♜xd8 or 27... ♖d7 28. cxd6 ♙xd6 29.♜b6.

27...♞xd6 28.♞dc1 ♙c6 29.♙c5 ♞e6

In case of 29...♞d7? White plays 30. ♙b6 ♙d6 31.♙e3, and Black collapses under the multiple threats of ♞b6, ♜b6 and ♙xh6.

30.♙c4 ♖d8 31.♞d1

Strong was 31.♖c2 ♞e8 32.♞d1.

31...♞e8 The only way for Black to stay in the game was 31...♙a4! 32. ♜xc7 ♙xd1 33.♖xd8 ♞xd8 34.♜xe6 fxe6 35.♙xa6 ♙c2.

32.♖c2 Black suffers from terrible pins.

32...♜h5 33.♜e7 Black resigned.

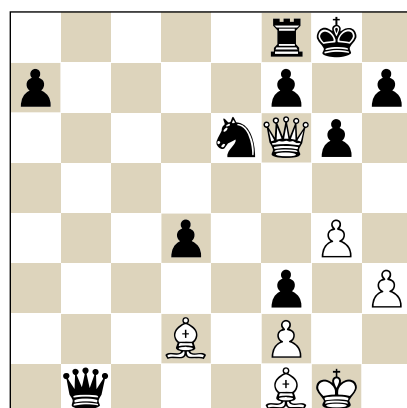
Strangely enough, these three brilliant games are all absent in Ivkov's *My 60 years in chess*!!

The 1965 Candidates' match against Larsen was an affair that was best quickly forgotten, and Ivkov duly ignores this setback completely in his book. After losing a better game with black in Game 1, and two draws in Games 2 and 3, Ivkov makes a horrible blunder in an equal position in Game 4. After a further loss in Game 5 he was on -3 after only five games and failed to stage a comeback.

The tournament in Havana later that year would turn out to be the turning point in his career. Ivkov

'Almost any legal move will do, except the one he played. This error became the most publicized blunder in Yugoslavia.'

played excellent chess and defeated both Smyslov and Fischer (as we have seen above). With two rounds to go first place seemed to be a formality. After the following blunder everything changed.

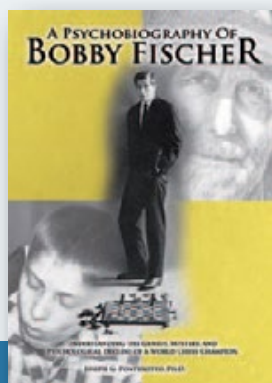


Gilberto Garcia-Borislav Ivkov
Havana Capablanca-mem 1965
position after 36.g4

After nervous play and numerous mistakes from both players Ivkov has reached a totally winning position. Not only has he won a lot of material, but his opponent is unable to create any threats. Ivkov was in time-trouble (as usual) and only had to get to move 40 safely. Five more reasonable moves and that's it. Ivkov would win the tournament ahead of Fischer, Smyslov, Geller... There are many, many ways to victory. Almost any legal move will do. Any move, except the one he played. This error became the most publicized blunder in Yugoslavia. Even in my time, 20 years on(!), it was still famous.

36...d3?? 37.♙c3

As Ivkov puts it himself, nothing in his life stayed the same after this blunder. He never fully recovered from the shock. Interestingly enough, Ivkov, in his book, blames himself for not offering a draw, since a draw would still have been enough for first place. A strange comment. In such a winning position a draw offer is the last thing to cross your mind. Furthermore, Ivkov's time-trouble was not that terrible. He writes that he had approximately two minutes to complete the remaining five (easy) moves. Ivkov could still have won the tournament. He was still half a point ahead of Smyslov, he was White in the last round against Robatsch and two rest days to recover from this nightmare blunder. Unrecognizable, Ivkov lost the last-round game (refusing a draw offer in the process) and finished shared second (with Fischer and Geller).

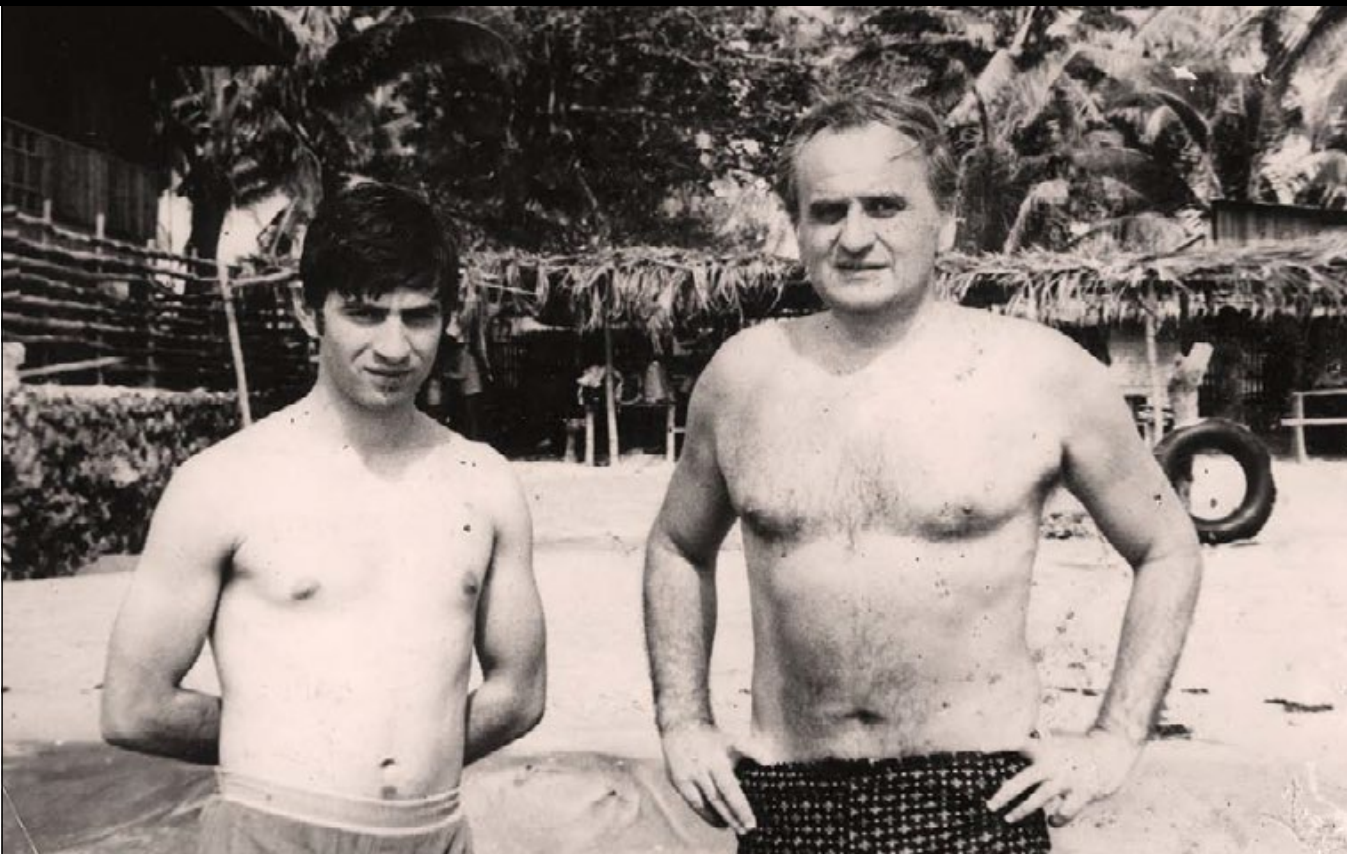


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The Philippines 1973. Ljubomir Ljubojevic and Borislav Ivkov relax on the beach.

After Havana Ivkov's career started to descend. His famous time-presures (which were sometimes intentional and did yield him some victories!) were becoming more and more difficult to handle. At the age of 46 he still qualified for the 1979 Interzonal in Rio de Janeiro, where he was to face a new generation with players like Timman, Mecking and Hübner. For five weeks he prepared fanatically with rising Yugoslav player Branko Damljanovic, who in the mid-80s became one of the best Serbian players. Recently Branko told me: 'We worked six to seven hours per day and Ivkov went to the Interzonal well prepared. This work with someone with such knowledge and talent helped me immensely in my own career.'

Ivkov played well in Rio and had qualifying chances until the very end. However, in Round 17 he failed to win with white against Harandi and in Round 19, the final round, he lost with white against Petrosian.

In the 80s, Borislav Ivkov was finding it more and more difficult to compete with the world top and gradually stepped down from the big stage. His last place in Bugojno in 1982 marked the end of his participation in super-tournaments. Still, on a good day, when he was attacked or had enough energy, he could still show flashes of the old Ivkov, as the young

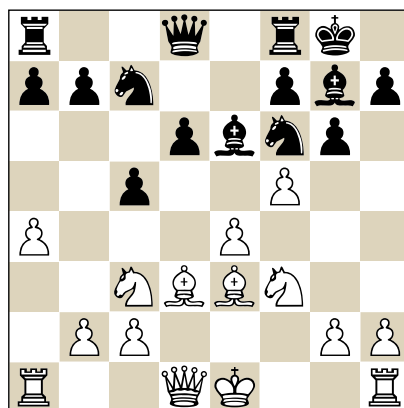
Evgeny Bareev had to find out to his detriment.

PU 12.2 – B09
Evgeny Bareev
Borislav Ivkov
 Rome 1990 (4)

Ivkov was 57 when he played this game. Bareev was a Soviet rising star at the time.

1.d4 g6 2.e4 ♖g7 3.♘c3 d6 4.f4
 The rising Soviet star, playing an old man (Bareev likely thought at the time that players of Ivkov's age should 'quit competitive chess' altogether), is confident. Let's see for how long.
4...♘f6 5.♘f3 0-0 6.♙e3 ♘a6 7.♙d3 c5 8.d5 ♘c7 9.a4 e6 10.dxe6 ♙xe6 11.f5

Playing an 'old' man, Bareev is (soon to his regret) happy to complicate matters.



11...♙xf5!! 12.exf5 ♖e8 13.♙d2 d5

Black has a fantastic pawn centre, White has an exposed king. White is forced to return his material advantage.

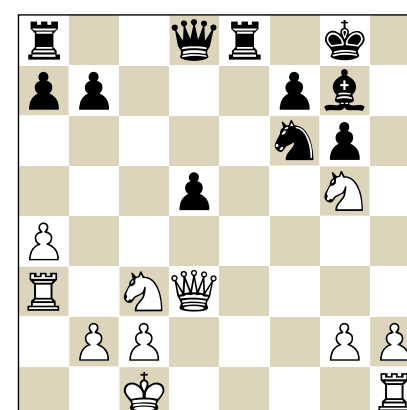
14.♙g5 c4 15.fxg6 hxg6 16.♙c1 cxd3 17.♙xd3 ♘e6

Material is equal, but Black has the better game. Ivkov converts his advantage effectively, playing energetically until the very end.

18.♖a3

The only way to develop the rook on a1.

18...♘xg5 19.♘xg5



19...♘e4!

This tactic is based on the follow-up on moves 21 and 22. Ivkov keeps and handles the initiative excellently.

20.♘gxe4 dxe4 21.♘xe4 ♙h4 22.♘c3 ♖e3! 23.♙f1 ♖c8 24.♙b1 ♙xc3

In a hopeless position Bareev plays for cheap tricks.

25.♙c1 ♖e1 26.♖xe1 ♙xe1 27.♖h3 ♙f2 28.♙h6 ♙xc2+ 29.♙a2 ♙xa4+ 30.♙b1 ♙c2+ 31.♙a2 ♙c3!

This seals the game. Because of time-pressure the game continues another eight moves.

32.♙h7+ ♙f8 33.♖xc3 ♖xc3 34.♙h8+ ♙e7 35.♙e5+ ♙d7 36.♙d5+ ♙c8 37.♙xf7 ♙a4+ 38.♙b1 ♙d1+ 39.♙a2 ♖c6

White resigned.

An eye for tactics, a feeling for the initiative, energy, the execution – it was all there in this game. Over the years, chess players lose (part of) their ambition, their energy level goes down and their priorities in life change. However, genuine talent never disappears. ■



Bucharest

‘Hello, Bucharest!’

Four months after the Kings’ tournament in Bazna was cancelled, the sixth edition took place in the capital Bucharest after all. The original star cast, including Carlsen and Anand, was no longer available due to other commitments and the field had to be reduced to four players, but with three Super-GMs and the country’s undisputed number one taking part, the Romanian Grand Slam dream was kept alive. A lucky win over Veselin Topalov in the rapid play-off earned Vassily Ivanchuk first prize and the coveted ticket to next year’s Grand Slam Final.



The Palace of the Parliament, a monument of megalomania built by dictator Nicolae Ceaucescu, is a tourist landmark in the centre of Bucharest that is hard to miss.

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

The venue of the sixth Kings' tournament was the National Institute of Statistics in the heart of Bucharest. If you organize an international event at short notice and end up in a government building, you must have excellent contacts. This certainly goes for the grand old lady of Romanian chess Elisabeta Polihroniade and tournament director Dan Emil Gabar. They have been the main movers of the Kings' tournament and although they had to swallow a disappointment when the tournament in Bazna fell through this summer, they didn't cease working. For next year their ambitions reach higher than ever, as they hope to gather all the superstars of today's chess in either Bazna or Bucharest.

Next year Dan Emil Gabar also hopes to stage an Open alongside the Kings' tournament to create a livelier atmosphere and attract more spectators. An understandable wish, as mostly only a handful of fans found their way to the conference hall where the games were played – which was a pity. Sitting in an almost empty hall soon makes you feel slightly uncomfortable. Even if you're seated at a safe distance from the stage, you easily get the feeling that you're disturbing the players, a fear you never have in a well-filled auditorium. Outside the hall the entertainment was limited to old charts presenting all kinds of statistics. Colourfully decorated, they showed how in the 19th and early 20th century agricultural production, the number of marriages, the number of letters delivered by mail and what not had steadily increased in Romania.

But easily the most fascinating statistics were to be found opposite the street of the National Institute of Statistics, where the enormous Palace of the Parliament dwarfs everything



Vassily Ivanchuk and a puzzled Veselin Topalov at the start of the second playoff game with Elisabeta Polihroniade in the background.

NEW IN CHESS

around it. Originally named The House of the Republic, this immense structure built by Nicolae Ceaucescu is a monument of megalomania that makes one wonder what on earth the Romanian dictator was thinking when he had it built. Measuring 270 by 240 metres, the building has a floor space of 340,000 square metres (just calculate how many times your modest abode fits into this space and you get the idea). About one million cubic meters of marble were used and 3,500 tonnes of crystal. At some point, 25,000 people were working round the clock to get the building ready in record time. The list of baffling figures is endless.

Sadly for Mr. Ceaucescu, he never lived or worked in the Palace, as it was not yet completely finished when he was removed from power and executed in December 1989. The current government is less happy with the building. It costs about half a million dollars a month only to maintain it.

To end this touristic excursion we may mention that in 2009 the popular BBC programme Top Gear staged a car race through the underground tunnels and garages of the palace with Jeremy Clarkson driving an Aston Martin and two friends of his a Fer-

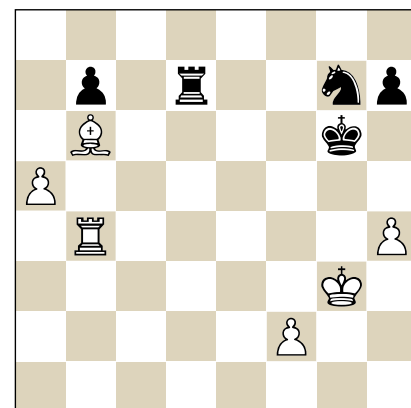
rari and a Lamborghini. And it was on one of the balconies of the palace that Michael Jackson, when he came to Bucharest in 1992 for a historic concert of his Dangerous Tour that was broadcast live in over 60 countries, shocked his Romanian fans by welcoming them with a heartfelt 'Hello Budapest!'

Compared to these fireworks, the statistics of the sixth Kings' tournament were rather mundane. Out of 12 games only two were decided. Both Vassily Ivanchuk and Veselin Topalov defeated Dieter-Liviu Nisipeanu in their white games, while top seed Fabiano Caruana drew all his games. The high number of draws was slightly deceptive. Caruana failed to convert a winning advantage against Topalov and Nisipeanu let Ivanchuk off the hook in a position that looked hopeless for the Ukrainian. In fact, the only 'fightless' game was Caruana-Ivanchuk, which ended in a draw after 30 moves, the minimum number required, in a position that was far from a dead draw.

The winner of the tournament, and as a consequence the first player to be invited to next year's Grand Slam Final, was decided in a rapid play-off.

Typical for the convivial atmosphere at the tournament was the press conference that Ivanchuk and Topalov gave only minutes before the play-off. In an animated talk with host Dorian Rogozenco they discussed crucial moments of their last-round game in which Topalov had taken some risk to play for a win with black, but had had to settle for a draw. Once they had fulfilled this duty they briefly retired to concentrate on the play-off.

In the first game it was again Topalov who impressed. With creative play he reached a winning position and seemed to be on the point of dealing an important blow when he encountered technical problems, ran low on time and in spite of the increments suddenly lost on time in a position in which he was a pawn up.



Topalov-Ivanchuk, play-off (1)
final position, after 45...Nf7

The second game was less exciting. Ivanchuk did not allow himself to be lured into the adventures Topalov was looking for and reached the draw that he needed.

Ivanchuk was the first one to stress that he had been very lucky, but it was a windfall he had little reason to object to, as he was delighted to secure an invitation to the Grand Slam Final.

Topalov is famous for his stoic reactions to defeats and setbacks, and this time was no different. Glossing over the unfortunate loss in the play-off he almost clinically summarized his play. 'I shouldn't complain. Playing with black I didn't have possibilities to win any game. With white I was pressing

against Caruana, I had a huge advantage, but at the same time I was completely lost in my black game against him. I won against Nisipeanu, so I used my possibilities. I don't think I was unlucky here.'

Perhaps he deliberately ignored the play-off, as his play in the regular games was further proof after his stable performance in the London GP that he is on his way back after a lesser period following the lost World Championship match against Vishy Anand in 2010. 'After the match I decided to take it easier. Obviously, when you play a match you are highly motivated and it's not the same even if you play in the strongest tournaments. They are great events, but they are not world championship matches. Somehow I was not really focused, I have to admit. I had many strange *fingerfehlens* and collapses. Many strange cases. But I hope I will be back. I didn't really care about chess for some time. I tried to relax, went on many holidays with my wife. It was not that I was not trying (the past two years). I think it's normal. It was not only the match, but the whole period between 2005 and 2010 was quite intense. So I thought let's have a little break.'

He feels that he is regaining confidence now that his results are improving. 'Even in the best events that I played in, I would lose a game at some point. This was only a short event, six games, but I managed not to lose. London was 11 rounds. I think I played very solidly and I didn't lose a single game. A slight change of style. In some games I am not so aggressive. If it's a draw then it's a draw, I kind of accept it. Because sometimes in the past I would go completely crazy, taking too many risks. In fact I was a little bit lucky in recent events. In London Giri pushed in the last round and then lost. And in the last round of the European Club Cup in Israel, Bologan declined a repetition of moves and in the end I was lucky to win the game. That used to happen to me, to lose after avoiding a repetition. Now it's the other way round. Maybe I have grown wiser (laughs).'



NOTES BY Veselin Topalov

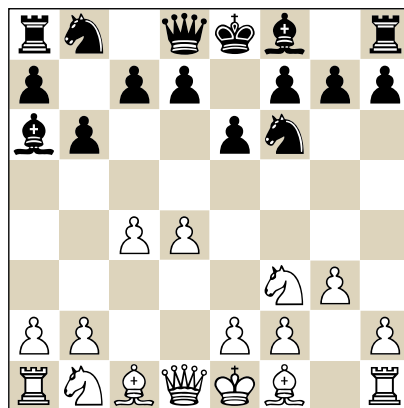
QI 14.7 – E15
Veselin Topalov
Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu
Bucharest 2012 (5)

There were only two decisive games in the tournament, which might give the wrong impression. Except for one game (Caruana-Ivanchuk) that ended when there was still a lot of play in the position, the games were really interesting and hard-fought. Statistics may be misleading.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6

For some reason I hadn't expected Liviu to go for the Queen's Indian.

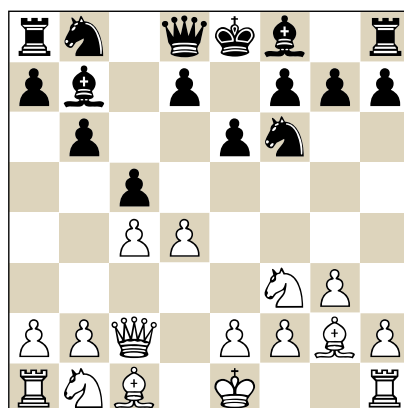
4.g3 ♖a6



5.♞c2

Here I have to make a critical choice. Against Leko in London I went 5.b3, but I have changed tactics. In the last round of the Olympiad, against Iturrizaga, I went 5.♞c2, like in the present game. In fact, this involves a pawn sacrifice and requires very concrete and precise knowledge.

5...♙b7 6.♙g2 c5

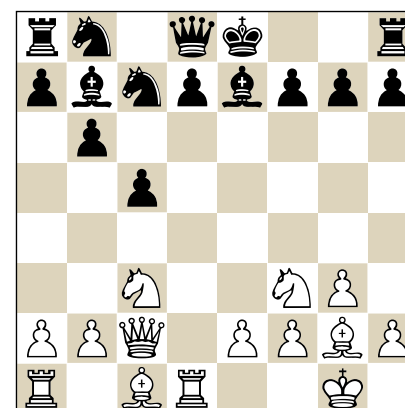


7.d5

This is the well-known pawn sacrifice.
7...exd5 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.0-0 ♙e7 10.♞d1 ♘c7

The most popular move by far is 10...♘c6, which leaves White with many options: 11.♞f5, 11.a3 or 11.♞a4. After the text-move the main difference is that I am not forced to play a3. I didn't remember much about this line, except for the fact that there was a game in which Sargissian beat Grischuk at the 2010 Olympiad.

11.♘c3 The move Sargissian played.



11...a6

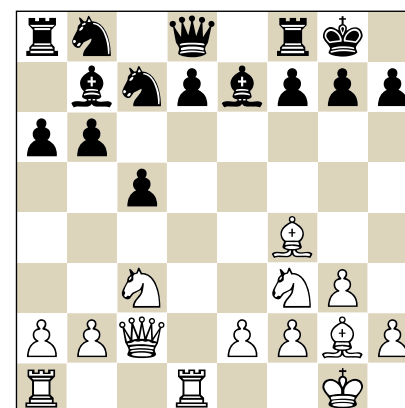
This waiting move was a complete surprise. After the game Liviu told me that this was an idea of Suba's, to make room for ...♞a7 to protect the bishop on b7. Obviously Black could not castle, 11...0-0, because of 12.♘g5, and Black loses immediately.

Black can also try 11...♘c6, but then White has 12.♘e5 ♘xe5 13.♙xb7, with an enduring initiative.

12.♙f4

I also considered the immediate 12.h4 in order to always have the option to jump to g5 with the knight, but in the end I preferred to play natural moves.

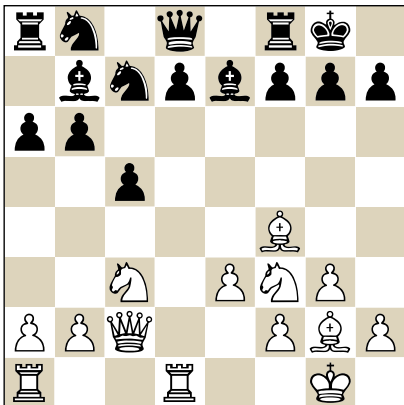
12...0-0



Bucharest

13.e3

Here again I could go 13.h4, but I could also choose the more positional 13.♙xc7 ♖xc7 14.♘d5 ♙xd5 15.♗xd5 ♘c6. I played e3 because I felt that there was no need to rush.



13...♖a7

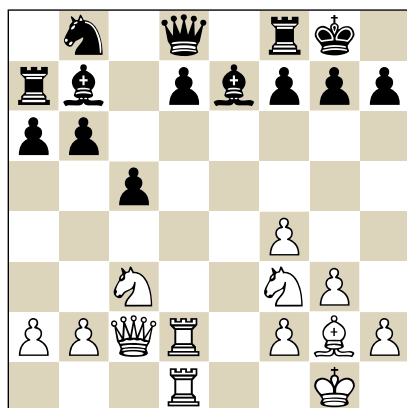
I had expected 13...♘e6. Frankly speaking, I don't like Black's set-up, because it doesn't change the character of the position. White is not really threatening to launch a kingside attack, but prefers to play positionally.

14.♗d2

I could also have gone 14.h4, because after 14...♘e6 15.♘d5 ♙xd5 16.♗xd5 ♗xd5 17.♗xd5 ♘c6. I decided to double the rooks.

14...♘e6 15.♗ad1 ♗xf4 16.exf4

The idea is to always take with the e-pawn. My king is very safe and the e-file is open. My advanced pawns sometimes can be really dangerous. The only drawback is that the d4-square becomes accessible to the knight. But for the moment Black experiences problems and I have ample compensation for the pawn.



16...♗c8 It's not easy to find a move for Black. He can play 16...♙a8, but this doesn't really change the situation, as ...♘c6 will not be such a big deal. I will go a3 or ♘e5 immediately. You don't feel the extra black pawn. White has all kinds of attacking plans involving ♗f5, h4, ♘g5 and ♙f1-d3.

17.h4

This move serves various purposes. First, I create a square, h2, for my king, just in case. Second, when at some point I jump to g5 with the knight and it is taken I want to take back with the h-pawn. I have no plans to push the h-pawn further. That plan would be too slow.

17...d6

After 17...♙xf3 18.♙xf3 ♘c6, 19.♘d5, attacking the pawn on b6, is very annoying, and after 19...♙d8 20.♘e3 Black cannot play 20...♘d4 because I just take it, as his queen is unprotected, and my knight may go to f5, when Black will find it difficult to make a move.

**DON'T BLUNDER WITH YOUR EDUCATION.
PLAY CHESS HERE.**

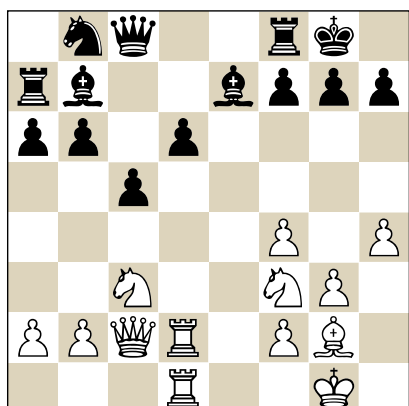


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I was expecting 17...h6 to eliminate ♖g5 once and for all in order not to have to calculate it all the time.



18.a3

A slightly strange move, just to see what happens.

I had another option: 18. ♖d5 ♙xd5 19. ♗xd5 ♘c6 20.a3, when Black is not able to free his pieces by returning the pawn with 20...♙f6, since he will lose another pawn after 21. ♗xd6 ♘d4 22. ♘xd4 ♙xd4 23. ♗xb6, and White is much better. I can advance the h-pawn, go ♗e4, followed by ♙f1-d3, or simply first play ♙h2, with the idea of putting the bishop on h3. I am running no risks and I have the initiative. I could also go 18. ♖g5 ♙xg5 19.hxg5, but this allows 19...♘c6, and after 20. ♗xd6 ♘d4 21. ♗d3 White is still better. But I was looking for more.

18...♘c6

Black could also choose to not do anything concrete and play 18...h6. Sometimes it's a plan to put his knight on f6, but here this is not yet possible because of 18...♘d7 19. ♖g5 ♙xg5 20. hxg5, followed by taking the pawn on d6, after which White is much better. My opponent was afraid that if he continued 18...♙xf3 19. ♙xf3 ♘c6, I would have 20. ♙xc6 ♗xc6 21. ♖d5 ♙d8, with a choice between 22. ♗e4 and 22. ♖e3, followed by ♖f5, a position he believed to be difficult for Black. It may be defensible, but it's not very pleasant.

19.♖d5

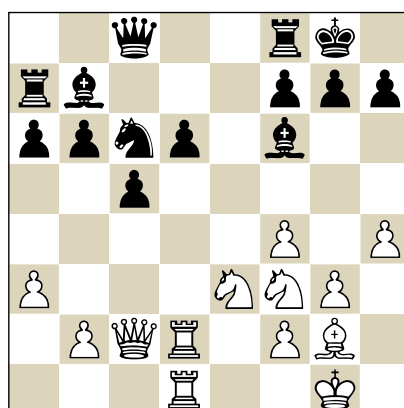
The automatic response and very tempting. The other possibility is to play 19. ♖e4 to attack the pawn on d6.

19...♙d8 20.♖e3 ♙f6

NEW IN CHESS



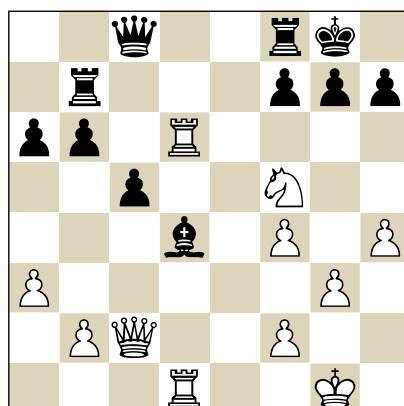
With pointed play Veselin Topalov showed the shadow sides of the original opening idea that Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu had borrowed from his countryman Mihail Suba.



21. ♗xd6 This looks logical, but probably safer was 21. ♖f5, when after 21... ♘d4 22. ♘3xd4 ♙xg2 23. ♗xg2 cxd4 24. ♗xc8 ♗xc8 25. ♘xd4 we reach an endgame in which the question is if White has a large advantage or not.

21...♘d4 22. ♘xd4 ♙xd4 23. ♙xb7 Another move was 23. ♖f5, when after 23... ♙xg2 24. ♗xg2 Black can check on b7 or a8.

23...♗xb7 24.♖f5



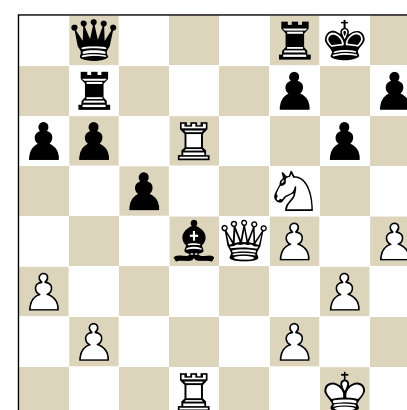
24...♗b8 Practically the only move. A move 'played by hand'.

The difference with the rook on b7 now is that here 24...♙xb2 loses to 25. ♗xb6 ♙xa3 (25...♙d4 runs into 26. ♗xd4) 26. ♘d6.

25. ♗e4 g6

We were approaching time-trouble, and this was a clever move from Liviu, giving me an option.

After 25...♙xb2 I had seen 26.h5 (or just 26. ♗1d5, keeping the pressure).



26. ♘e7+

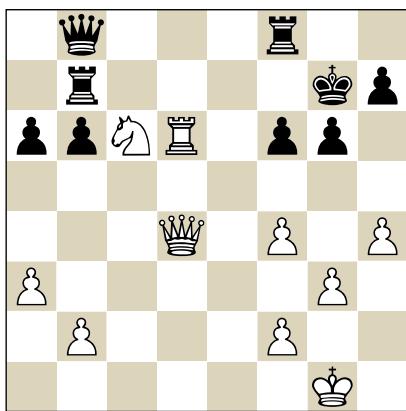
I could win a pawn with 26. ♘xd4 ♗xd6 27. ♗xb7 cxd4 28. ♗xa6, but I was not sure about the position after 28...♗e8 29. ♗d3 ♗d5, when the pawn on d4 does not fall, as 30. ♗xd4 would be a blunder in view of 30...♗e1+. I thought that Black had enough activity in this endgame,

which is why I went for the exchange sacrifice.

26...♔g7 27.♖1xd4 cxd4

28.♗xd4+ f6 29.♘c6

I felt that I was running no risk, but that at the same time it was not impossible for Black to save himself; the black king is exposed, whereas mine is totally safe. I have total control of the d-file and my knight is dangerous. The question is if it will be enough for a win.



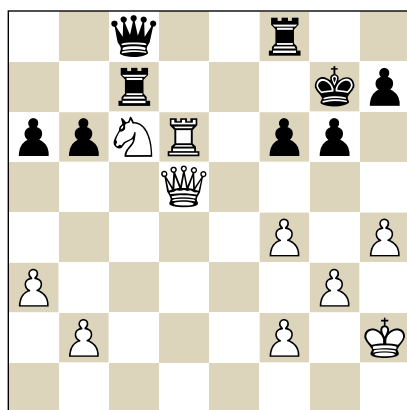
29...♗c8 I was expecting 29...♗e8, when I was considering ♔g2 or ♗d5 to keep the position. 30.♘d8 ♗e7 looks tempting, but then White cannot go 31.♗xb6 because of 31...♗e1+ 32.♔h2 ♗e4, when I have to bail out to a tricky endgame with 33.♗b7+, as 33.♘e6+ ♔g8 loses immediately.

30.♔h2

I was briefly attracted by 30.♗d5, but I found 30...♗h3 disturbing, when after 31.♘d4 ♗e7 32.♘e6+ ♔h8 Black wants to play 33...♗fe8, and I have problems with my first rank.

30...♗c7 31.♗d5

I could also have collected the pawn with 31.♗xb6, but 31...♗d7 would force the exchange of my rook, which reduces my activity.

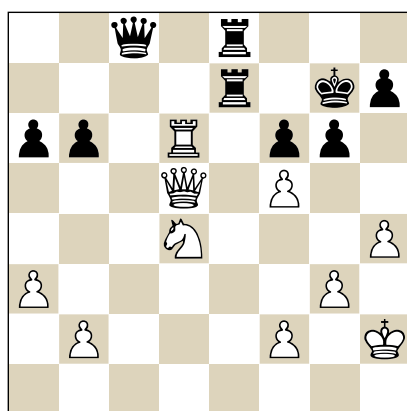


31...♗e8 31...♗b7 looks strong, but doesn't achieve much. After 32.♗e6 ♗fc8 does not only run into 33.♗xf6+, but taking on c6 was no threat either, as White has ♗d7+.

Believing that 31...♗e8 was a mistake, I quickly played my next two moves.

32.♘d4 ♗ce7 33.f5 Afterwards

I was not happy with this move. I should simply have collected a second pawn on b6 or have played 33.h5. The text-move looks strong, as I threaten to destroy the defences around Black's king and get an imposing knight on e6, but he could have defended.



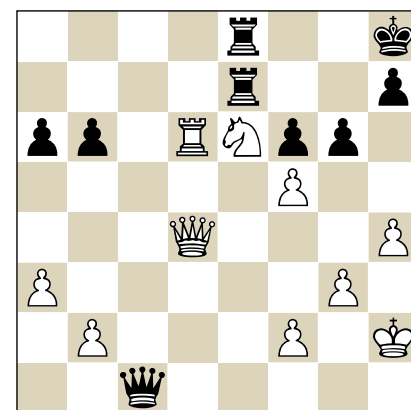
33...♗c1

He should have played 33...♗e5, which I noticed while he was thinking, when

after 34.♗d7+ (I considered playing 34.♗f3 gxf5 35.♗xb6, when after both 35...♗f8 and 35...♗e7 Black has good chances to hold) 34...♗5e7 I have only given a check and after 35.♘e6+ ♔h8 Black is fine.

34.♘e6+ ♔h8 Now Black is lost.

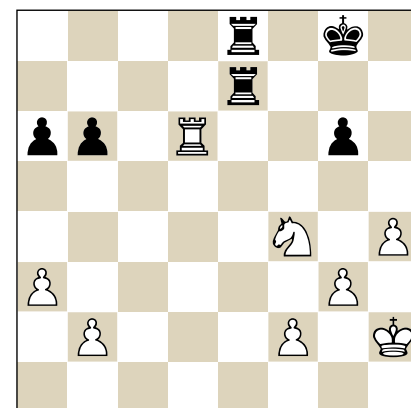
34...♔h8 35.♗d4



35...♗c2 35...♗f7 is met by 36.♘g5.

36.♗xf6+ ♔g8 37.fxg6 ♗xg6

38.♗xg6+ hxg6 39.♘f4



39...♗g7

It would probably have been better to defend the pawn on b6, but even then I would be three pawns up (for the exchange), which is too much.

40.♗xb6 a5 Black resigned.

■ ■ ■



Susan Polgar Chess Daily News

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Ivanchuk's play in the rapid games may have been a bit shaky, but the fans were happy with his win. They congratulated him, asked for a signature and had their photo taken with him. The fans adore Ivanchuk. His total dedication to the game, his absent-mindedness, his clumsiness when at the start of the last round he changes a swivel chair at his table for a regular chair without moving parts. They love it when he is in full 'Chuky mode', as he is when he arrives for the press conference after he has drawn his game against Caruana in Round 5. He's already put on his coat and keeps it on as he takes his place behind the table. He is asked if he is cold, a kind suggestion that he might take off his coat, cap and shawl. Getting the message he stands up, takes them off and puts them on a chair in the spectator section. When he is done with the press conference he briefly lingers, as he wants to hear what Nisipeanu and Topalov have to say about their game. He even joins in, making some suggestions. Then it's time to leave, and he turns around and wanders out of the room. Only when he is in the hall does he realize that he has forgotten something and turns around to walk back and pick up his coat. As he puts it on and dreamily begins to walk away a visitor taps him on the shoulder and points at the cap and shawl that are still on the chair. Ivanchuk nods his head in gratitude, picks up the rest of his attire, puts it on and walks away.

When we meet for a talk on the day after the last round, he arrives in 'semi-Chuky mode'. Although he's been told several times, he still doesn't know at what time he has to play a group of children in a simul and occasionally his thoughts seem to drift away, but on the whole he is focused. He readily admits that his withdrawal in his own world is a purposeful defence against exterior influences. 'Before the game I prefer to concentrate, to get the special concentration I need for chess. And after the game I need to relax. I think



NEW IN CHESS

Vassily Ivanchuk: 'I am completely normal.'

it's normal, I am at work. I just try to defend myself against things that can affect me before the game.'

When I refer to the incident at the Istanbul Olympiad before his game against Kramnik, when he refused to sit at the board when a dignitary was to make the first move (see *New In Chess* 2012/7, p.9), he reacts immediately. 'In general I don't like it! Two people are going to play a game, and I don't like it if someone else is going to make one of the moves. Maybe I should sometimes allow this, if it's for publicity, but then it would be better if the organizers informed me about this, maybe 20 minutes before the game. Because if I already want to plunge into my own world before the game and then somebody comes and makes my move, it makes my task more difficult.

'[Plunging into my own world is] a special feeling, concentration. Of course it depends on whether it is rapid or classical, the tournament situation, who is my opponent, how am I feeling, many aspects. But it helps me to concentrate. When I start to play a game I try to forget about previous games and try to concentrate on this game. This game now is the most important to me. But of course I am not a computer and you cannot simply press a button, delete, and everything you want to forget disappears automatically. But if you want to play well, it's important to concentrate on the now. Chess is a very serious matter, because many aspects are important. Not only theory, not only knowledge, a lot of things. You're always trying to discover something new, but it's not easy.'

At 43, Ivanchuk remains one of the best players in the world. Chess continues to give him a lot of pleasure. 'Maybe because it is still not only a job for me. It's a very important part of my life.' Born in 1969, he is one of the leaders of a unique generation. 'It's a very special generation, because during our careers the computer entered chess. So we know how to play without computers, which is also important. We can analyse without computers. I am not saying that younger players cannot do this, but we are more in the habit of doing this. That's important to improve your chess understanding. We are less dependent on the computer, a little bit less.'

Like any present-day player he uses the computer, but his conclusions often differ from what the computer says. 'Very often. Very often I don't agree with the assessment of positions. But that's not only me. Sometimes it happens that the computer's assessment is very abstract. It's correct, but it's not useful for a practical game. You have to prove the assessment with very strong moves and if you don't find all of these strong moves you may lose very quickly. For a computer this is not a problem, but for humans it is not so easy.'

Getting older also invites questions about diminishing strength and eagerness, a subject that he finds a bit tiresome. 'I don't see any special problems, I see that there are a lot of strong players and it is not easy to fight against them, but I can try. I am never without a chance.' And what's the use of asking him if he's afraid that one day he may lose his motivation? 'Why think of something negative, while I am still enjoying everything?'

He'd rather spend his energy studying players that impress him. 'Aronian, Carlsen, Topalov, Gelfand, Kramnik, of course Karpov, Kasparov, Anand, Kamsky.'

And of course youngsters like Carlsen and Aronian have brought something new to chess. 'Yes, of course, they have a lot of ideas. It's

very interesting to study them. But any interesting opening idea is fascinating to study, this need not be a grandmaster's idea, it can be from anyone. It also depends on what you want to study. If you want to study the art of fighting, you have Carlsen, Topalov. If you want to study technical positions, Karpov. If you want to study very flexible play, maybe

'I loved to watch Mike Tyson videos. His style and fighting spirit was great.'

Anand. Before I play someone I try to think what his strengths are, what his weaknesses are. But of course I am not the only one who is doing that.'

After the Kings' tournament he will take a one-month break. When you see the concentrated Ivanchuk at chess tournaments it's hard to imagine that at home there are days that he shuts himself off from chess. For Ivanchuk himself it's not hard to imagine at all. 'I like reading different kinds of books. Recently I was reading Alexandre Dumas and Marc Levy, a French writer. I also have a family, I like to spend time with my wife. All the normal things. I am completely normal.'

Talking about sports he says he prefers individual sports. 'I like to watch fencing. I'm not very good at names, but I like watching the world championships. Especially women. It's also very similar to chess, often one woman has a white suit and the other one a black suit. It's quite beau-

tiful. Aesthetically pleasing. I also like top-level tennis. I like to watch the women, my favourite player is Caroline Wozniacki from Denmark. Of the men I like Djokovic very much. And, of course, Nadal. When I was much younger I liked Lendl. He was a very technical player, comparable to Karpov's style in chess.'

As for boxing, I loved to watch Mike Tyson videos. His style and fighting spirit was great. I was also very much impressed by Lennox Lewis. You can learn from boxing. Sometimes it's very important to fight till the end. Boxing is quite similar to chess. The ring is square, it's one against one, you have the knock-out system (laughs). There are similarities. It's no secret anymore that before his match against Capablanca, Alekhine used some advice from karate. I suppose something about one-against-one fighting, how to feel your opponent. He probably thought some of this useful in chess.'

Another pastime is studying languages. His favourite language is Spanish, which he believes he speaks better than English thanks to Mexican GM Manuel Hoyos, who has been his second on more than one occasion. Right now he is not studying a language, but he is thinking of picking up French or Portuguese.

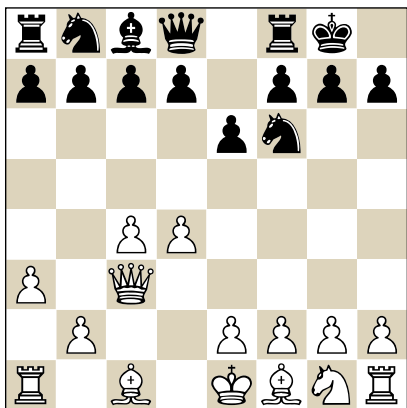
Later that evening he mentions another hobby of his when he asks me if I can help him obtain a Dutch book. It's a book on draughts, a monograph written by former World Champion Ton Sijbrands on his predecessor, the legendary Latvian Andris Andreiko. His request reminds me of the first knock-out World Championship in Groningen in 1999. Ivanchuk was eliminated in the early rounds but stayed on. He regularly visited the press room to play draughts with Erik Hoeksema, a Dutch chess IM and no mean draughts and bridge player. Ivanchuk laughs. 'I had no chance, he was a much better player than me. But now I am not so sure, now I think I would have very good chances!'



NOTES BY
Vassily Ivanchuk

NI 20.4 – E32
Vassily Ivanchuk
Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu
Bucharest 2012 (1)

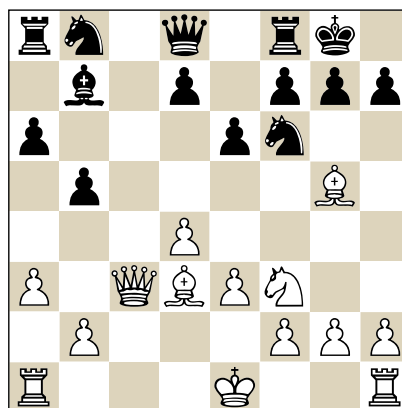
1.d4 ♘f6 **2.c4** e6 He goes for the Nimzo-Indian. Nisipeanu plays many different openings. You can expect almost anything, e.g. 2...c5 3.d5 e5, one of his frequently played favourites. Or 2...g6, steering for a King's Indian, which he also plays a lot.
3.♗c3 ♙b4 **4.♖c2** 0-0 **5.a3** ♙xc3+ **6.♖xc3**



6...b5 This rather rare variation is not very popular at top level. I remember a match in Iran in 2009 between Anatoly Karpov and Ghaem Maghami in which many games with this line were played (with Karpov as White). An interesting match that consisted of both classical games and rapid and blitz games, which the Iranian GM won with the smallest difference. In the last game Nisipeanu played with this variation, against Irina

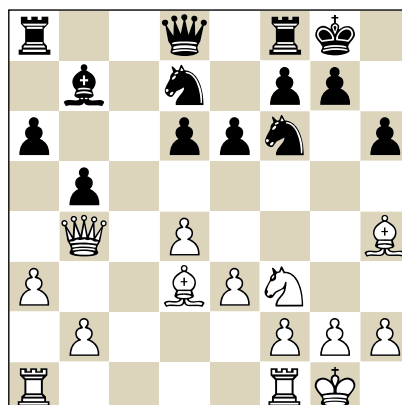
Krush, he opted for 6...h6, a slightly strange move in my opinion. It's a bit slow and he lost that game.

7.cxb5 c6 The logical follow-up.
8.♙g5 White has many possibilities, such as 8.a4 or 8.e3 to protect the pawn, but I decided to give back the pawn and play a solid game.
8...cxb5 **9.e3** ♙b7 **10.♗f3** a6 **11.♙d3**



White has the bishop pair. If Black takes on f3, I get the open g-file and if he doesn't capture, I can manoeuvre my knight to b3 via d2 and then possibly to c5, depending on the circumstances.

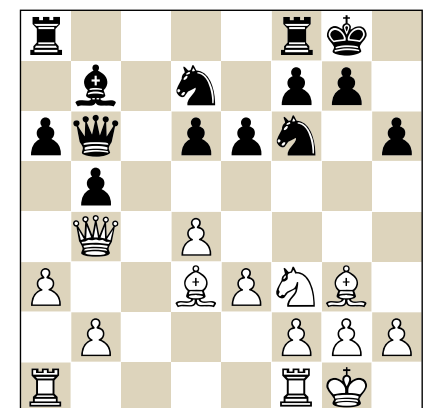
11...h6 **12.♙h4** d6 **13.0-0**
As said, I am not afraid of ...♙xf3.
13...♗bd7 **14.♖b4**



It's already not so pleasant for Black. The d6-pawn is hanging and he has to come up with a plan.

14...♖b6
It looks like he can shake off the pressure with 14...♙xf3 15.gxf3 ♗d5 16.♙xd8 ♗xb4, but this fails for a tactical reason: 17.axb4 ♖fxd8 18.♖a5, with the annoying threat of ♖fa1 and the additional point that 18...♗b8 doesn't work because of 19.♙xb5.

15.♙g3



The problem of the d6-pawn persists. Theoretically, this position cannot be called acceptable for Black, so he will have to find an improvement earlier on. The position is not lost, but it's so much easier to play with white.

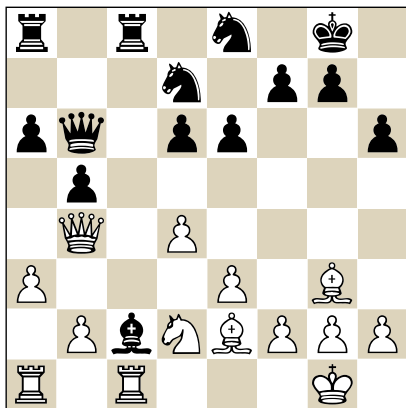
15...♙e4 **16.♙e2**
Of course White will not exchange the bishop.

16...♖fc8
Now taking the pawn on d6 would obviously be risky, as the black rook would penetrate to c2.

17.♖fc1 ♗e8 **18.♗d2** ♙c2
An attempt to create some counter-play in combination with ...♖ab8 and ...a5. I thought for a long time here



and failed to find anything concrete for White.



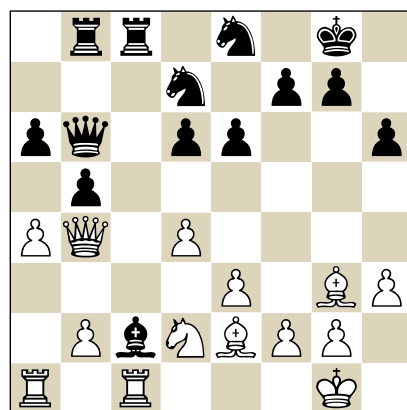
19.h3

If I try 19.b3 ♖ab8 in order to push 20. a4, he has counterplay with 20... ♜df6 21.axb5 axb5, and in some variations Black can go ... ♜d5 and ... ♜c3, highlighting the drawback of 19.b3.

Of course I also considered 19. ♜c4 bxc4 20. ♖xc2 d5, when White is better with the two bishops, but I did not see anything concrete. Then I asked myself: What exactly is it that Black wants? And I understood: ...a5 is not a

threat; the knight on e8 cannot move because of the pawn on d6; and the knight on d7 cannot move either, as this would allow ♜c4 and leave the queen unprotected. And ... ♖ab8 also has a drawback. I may play ♜f3, followed by ♜e1, and White is positionally better. And so I played the quiet waiting move h3.

19... ♖ab8 20.a4



20...bxa4

I considered 20...a5 as a resource for Black, but after 21. ♖xb5 ♖d8

22. ♖a6 (22. ♖h5 I didn't like, because here the queen is slightly misplaced) my queen, strange as its position may seem, stands very well, e.g. 22... ♖xb2 (in case of 22... ♖a8 I will move the queen to f3: 23. ♖b7 ♖ab8 24. ♖f3, and now 24... ♖xb2 won't work because of 25. ♜c4) 23. ♜c4 ♖a8, when 24. ♖c6 is interesting, but I can also play with two rooks against queen after 24. ♖xa8 ♖xa8 25. ♜xb2.

Black cannot take the pawn with the bishop, 20... ♗xa4, as the bishop will be trapped after 21.b3.

20... ♜df6 was possible, but it's not as good as indicated above, as there is not the idea of transferring it to c3. Still, this may have been his best practical chance.

21. ♖xb6 ♜xb6

21... ♖xb6 is impossible because of 22. ♜c4.

22. ♗xa6

This was the drawback of 19... ♖ab8, which left the a6-pawn unprotected.

22... ♖c7

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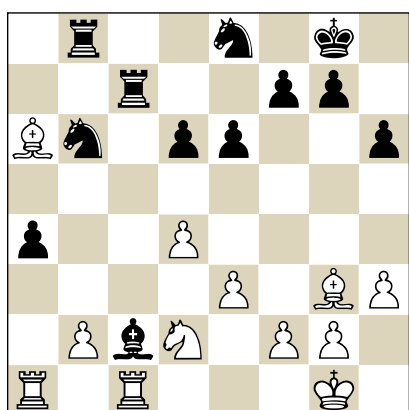
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Press officer Dorian Rogozenco praises the winner at the prize-giving. At the far left tournament director Dan Emil Gabar. To Ivanchuk's right Elisabeta Polihroniade and chief arbiter Faik Gasanov.



23...b5

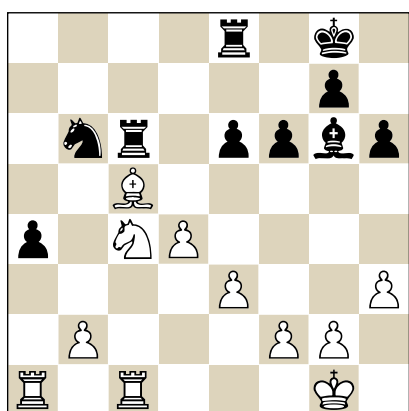
Material loss cannot be avoided.

23...f6 24.xe8 xe8 25.xd6
xc6 26.c5 g6

Maybe 26...d3 was more stubborn, intending to play ...b5 at some point. But anyway White has a healthy extra pawn.

27.c4

This wins a second pawn.



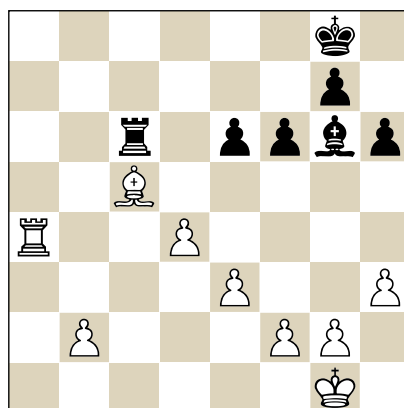
27...xc4

After 27...d7 White has an important trick: 28.a5, and then I take the pawn on a4. 28.d6 is met by 28...b8, and Black is still fighting.

28.xc4 a8

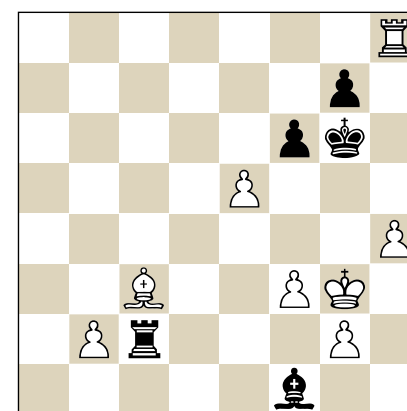
Black cannot go for the b-pawn with 28...b8, because after 29.cxa4 b2 30.a8+ h7 31.a7 he is helpless against the threat f8, and his position collapses.

29.cxa4 xa4 30.xa4



With two pawns up all that remains for White is a technical job that is not too difficult.

30...d3 31.a3 e2 32.a8+ f7 33.a7+ g8 34.b7 a6 35. b4 a1+ 36.h2 c1 37.h4 h5 38.c3 c4 39.c7 d3 40.c5 c2 41.g3 e2 42.e4 f7 43.d5 exd5 44.xd5 g4 45.f3 e6 46. xh5 c4 47.e5 g6 48.h8 f1



49.exf6

The last trap to avoid was 49.e6?, with the idea of 49...xg2+ 50.f4, threatening 51.h5 mate, as Black plays 49...f5, and suddenly the position of the white king is highly awkward. After I took on f6, Black resigned. ■

Bucharest 2012

						cat. XX	
			1	2	3	4	TPR
1	Veselin Topalov	IGM BUL 2769	**	1/2 1/2	1/2 1/2	1/2 1	3 1/2 2796
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3	Fabiano Caruana	IGM ITA 2786	1/2 1/2	1/2 1/2	**	1/2 1/2	3 2733
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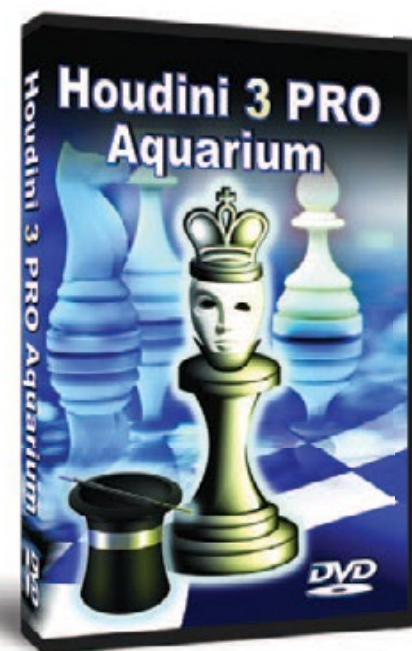
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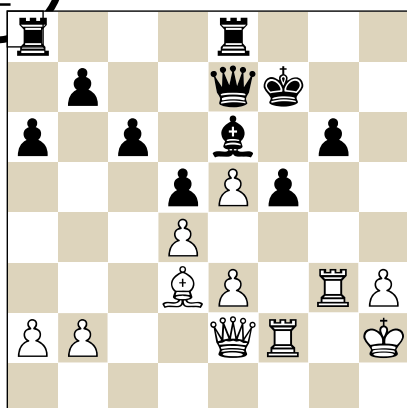
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Forcing Moves

Solutions of page 65

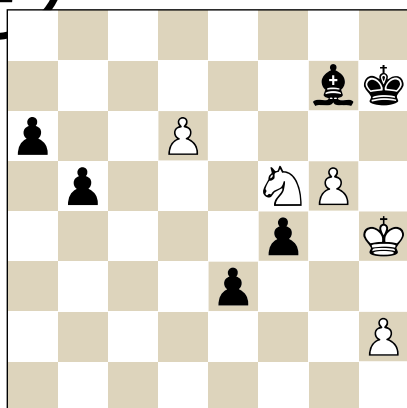
1



Tkachiev-Mazé
France 2011

1. ♖g4 The fearsome Russo-Kazakhstani transplant probably kicked himself when the computer revealed 1. ♖g6! ♜xg6 2. ♕xf5+! ♜xf5 (2... ♔h6 3. ♕xe6 ♖f8 4. ♕f5) 3. ♖xf5, winning much more brilliantly. **1... ♖g8?** The engine finds the sleight-of-hand resource 1... ♗f6!, but 2. ♗f4 ♗g7 3. ♗g5 still breaks through on f5. **2. ♕xf5 gxf5 3. ♗h5+ ♜f8 4. ♖xg8+ 1-0**

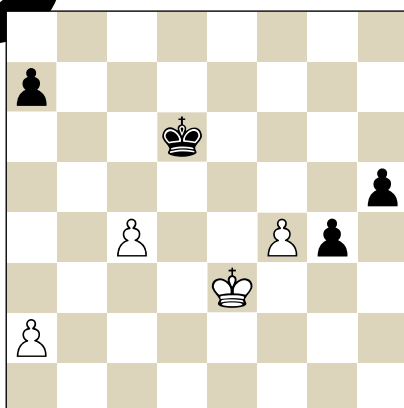
2



Bauer-Karr
France 2007

1. d7 (simpler than 1. ♖h5 ♜c3) **1... e2 2. ♖h5!** was a cute quietus. **1-0**

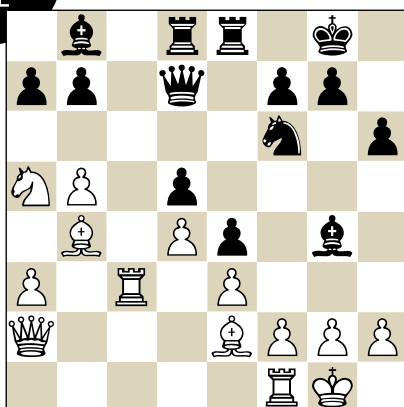
3



Degraeve-Edouard
Germany Bundesliga 2009/10

White resigned after **1... h4 0-1**. This diagram evokes an amusing sense of déjà vu; I was once suckered by the same illusion of the 'unstoppable' pawns two files apart on the fourth rank. But after 2. ♖f2 ♜c5 3. f5 ♜d6! and ... ♜e5 the black king somehow outruns both passers. Other moves also win for Black but the idea is the same.

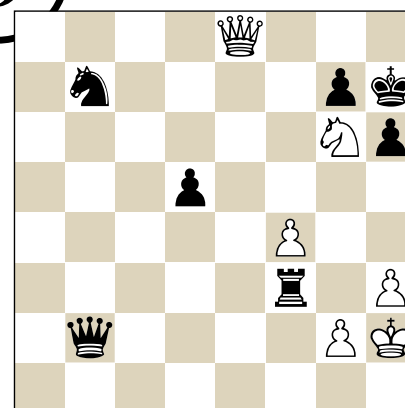
4



Bischoff-Fressinet
Germany Bundesliga 2008/09

Le roi perdu est mort: **1... ♕f3! 2. h3** Or 2. ♖e1 (not 2. ♖fc1 ♗g4 3. ♕f1 with a classical bishop sac: 3... ♕xh2+!) 2... ♗g4 3. g3 ♜h5!, and with the loose ♖e1 a winning sac on g3 follows. **2... ♜h7! 3. ♖fc1 ♜g5 0-1**

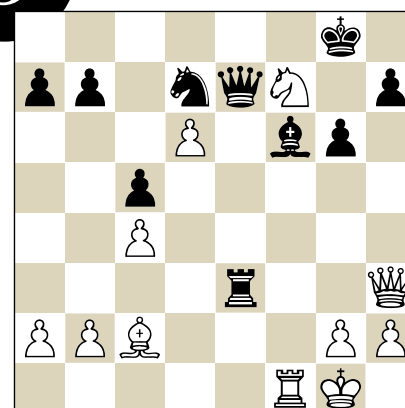
5



Vachier-Lagrave-Renet
France 2011

1. ♜e7 Obvious, but the sequel demands good calculation: **1... ♖xh3+ 2. ♜xh3 ♗b3+ 3. ♜h2 d4 4. f5!** The real point. **4... ♗c4 5. ♗g6+ ♜h8 6. f6 ♗c7+ 7. g3 1-0**

6



Robson-Bacrot
Khanty-Mansiysk 2011

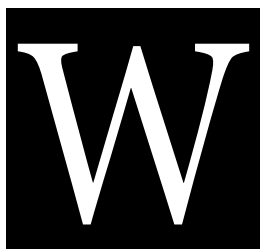
Black foresaw a stunning shot: **1... ♕d4! 2. ♜h6+ ♜h8 3. ♗g4?** Best was 3. ♜h1 ♖e1 4. ♕d3 ♖xf1+ 5. ♕xf1 ♗f6 6. g4 ♜e5! stopping a fork trick and bagging the d-pawn. **3... ♗f6! 4. g3 ♖xg3+ 0-1**



Hans Ree

Down Planinc's path

In 2010, *Totalni Gambit*, a film on the tragic life of Albin Planinc, was shown on Slovenian television. Watching the dvd, Hans Ree remembered the good years when Planinc used to scourge the board with fabulous attacks.



When our editor Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam sent me the dvd about the life of Albin Planinc (1944-

2008), he added that he would be interested in my recollections of the period when Planinc had, as he put it, a cult following in the Netherlands.

I certainly did have memories of that time – my embarrassing score against him for one. In the course of two years, 1973 and 1974, and four Dutch tournaments, Planinc had scored 3½-½ against me, without having to show the brilliance he evinced in some of his other games. Many of these beautiful games against other players I also remembered.

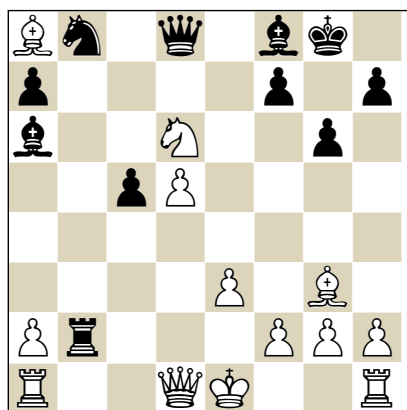
Maybe his most impressive game in

these tournaments was played against Hein Donner in the second round of the 1973 Hoogovens tournament in Wijk aan Zee. It was the second game Planinc played on Dutch soil, and you might say that he presented his business card.

He sacrificed a rook to keep White's king in the centre. Was it correct? I don't know. Even if it wasn't, one is reminded of Tal's saying that there were two kinds of sacrifices, correct ones and his own. Speculative sacrifices are often the most beautiful. The game against Donner was published in *New In Chess* 2009/2, in an obituary of Planinc by the Slovenian grandmaster Georg Mohr, but I will shamelessly repeat it here.

Jan Hein Donner
Albin Planinc
Wijk aan Zee 1973

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.♘c3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.♘f3 g6 7.♘d2 ♙g7 8.♘c4 0-0 9.♙f4 b6 10.♙xd6 ♖e8 11.♙g3 ♘e4 12.♘xe4 ♗xe4 13.e3 b5 14.♘d6 ♖b4 15.♙xb5 ♙f8 16.♙c6 ♙a6 17.♙xa8 ♖xb2



Beautiful play by Black. A hard test would now be 18.♘e4, but Donner collapses.

18.♙a4 ♗f6 19.♖c1 ♙xd6 20.f4 ♗f5 21.e4 ♖e2+ 22.♙d1 ♗h5

White resigned.

Forward Kazimirich!

In the next round, Planinc beat Miguel Najdorf in 20 moves. A few rounds later, against Evgeny Vasiukov, he played the King's Gambit, an opening with which he had an unhappy love affair all through his short chess career. That time he was at the receiving end of a rook sacrifice and was beaten by Vasiukov as brilliantly as he had triumphed himself in his victorious games.

Against the Dutch master Rob Har- toch he played a kind of chess that ap- pears quite modern now, but might have raised an eyebrow then. Af- ter a modest opening (1.b3) Planinc stormed – with his king on e2 – Black's kingside with his pawns running to g6 and h5. That game he won in 25 moves.

Playing over many of his games, which was a joy, I was often reminded of the famous battle cry of Spassky's trainer Alexander Tolush, 'Forward Kazimirich!' So often did I see Plan- inc's f-, g- and h-pawns running for- ward and raising hell at Black's king- side that I found it hard to understand how his opponents still dared to play the Sicilian against him.

The Hoogovens tournament of 1973 was won by Tal and Balashov. Plan- inc shared fourth place with Vlastimil Hort. Almost all his games had been exciting and the Dutch public had come to love him.

Social life at the Hoogovens tour- naments was famous at the time, but Planinc didn't take part in it. He was quiet and went to his hotel room early,

walking with a slight stoop, with his eyes fixed on the ground. Maybe this reserved appearance added to his popularity, because it made him the proverbial chess genius, locked in his own world, averse to social contacts and shining at the board.

Planinc's path

Later that year he was invited to the IBM tournament in Amsterdam, where he would score the greatest success of his career. He shared first place there with Petrosian, ahead of Kavalek and Spassky.

After that he was invited to the 1974 Hoogovens tournament, of course, and that year gave rise to the legend of Planinc's path. It is a narrow footpath in Wijk aan Zee that leads from the tournament hall to the Het Hoge Duin hotel, up on a dune, where the grandmasters used to stay in those years. The name of the path is due to a misunderstanding based on the fact that the Dutch words for stalemate and path sound exactly the same.

In 1974, arbiter Constant Orbaan and press officer Cora van der Zanden took a walk on the beach and returned to the tournament hall by way of that path. Do you know 'het pat van Planinc', Planinc's stalemate, asked Constant, referring to a stalemate by which Planinc had just saved his game against Walter Browne. Yes, of course I know this path, but I didn't know that it is named after Planinc, said Cora, a bit surprised. Since then, the path is known to the Wijk aan Zee regulars as Planinc's path.

A few years ago I visited the Wijk aan Zee tournament, which at that point was no longer the Hoogovens tournament and not yet the Tata Steel tournament, but the Corus tournament. Fortunately, they were all the same under different names.

I also took a walk on the beach and returned to the tournament hall by Planinc's path – a trip down memory lane, as I had walked that path hundreds of times when I was still a competitor.



NEW IN CHESS ARCHIVES

Albin Planinc in Wijk aan Zee in 1974. 'Maybe this reserved appearance added to his popularity, because it made him the proverbial chess genius, locked in his own world.'

In 1979 I had walked it on crutches because of a broken leg, which wasn't hard at all, except on a day when the road was covered with black ice and I had to be supported by the tournament director Piet Zwart on one side and public relations officer Hans Bakker on the other. Piet Zwart slipped and broke a rib. My broken leg had caused a broken rib and I wondered where the chain would end.

When I walked that path in 2009, along the village cemetery down to the tournament hall, I wondered whether there would be a sign naming Planinc. He had died a few weeks earlier, but I don't think that I knew that then. There was no sign to be seen.

Shouldn't there be one, I asked the chief of the tournament's press office Tom Bottema. To my slight surprise he immediately went into action and phoned the city hall to argue that the path would be officially named after Planinc.

It appeared that the path had no official name yet. The civil servants at city hall were enthusiastic about Bottema's

idea. Apparently it was all up to the mayor now.

I don't think anything came of this nice idea, but in one Slovenian obituary of Planinc the cold attitude of the Slovenian authorities after his death was contrasted with the warm appreciation by the Dutch, who were said to have named a river embankment after him.

Declining strength

Planinc's results in the Dutch Hoogovens and IBM tournaments of 1974 were not as good as those of the preceding year. Especially the IBM tournament, where he finished 10th, must have been a disappointment.

I don't know if he was invited to later Dutch tournaments. He probably was, but in 1975 he played only one tournament abroad, in Moscow, with a bad result, and for the next few years, apart from a few games in 1977 at the Balkaniad in Albena, Bulgaria, he stayed in Yugoslavia – till 1979, when he played his last tournament, the Rubinstein Memorial in Polanica-



Hans Ree

Zdroj, Poland. The cruel statistics say $+4 = 4 - 7$, performance rating 2370. He was only 35 years old then, but his strength had already been declining for a few years. He was seriously ill.

After that, as I see in my database, he played a few games in a Yugoslav team event in 1981 and one game in the Hartberg Open in Austria in 1991, but that last game is just a mistake, because Planinc didn't play there. By that time he had already been in a mental hospital for many years.

Another mistake may be the changing of his name to Planinec, as it is often spelled nowadays. I have long thought that this was a nationalistic Slovenian gesture to distance him from the Serbo-Croatian language of former Yugoslavia, just as grandmasters who lived in Latvia now get a Latvian 's' affixed to their names, becoming 'Petrovs' and 'Tals' retro-actively in celebration of the country's national independence. But in fact the explanation may be simpler.

On the Planinc discussion pages of the site chessgames.com a contributor wrote that he had spoken with a researcher for the Slovenian TV film, who had told him that there had never been an official name change to Planinec, but that it had simply been a spelling error by one of the officials of the mental institution where he spent the last 20 years of his life. So it's possible that, just as Niemzowitsch lost the 'e' in his name by a bureaucratic error, Planinc gained one.

As he faded out of the chess world, former colleagues sometimes wondered what had become of him. Was

he still alive? It was said that he was living in a mental institution, but details were not known, at least not to me.

A statue for Planinc

The film *Totalni Gambit*, directed by Jan Cvitkovic, was shown on Slovenian television in 2010. It does not show footage of the real Planinc, who is only represented in the film by a silent actor who is first shown lying curled up on a giant chessboard with his hands on his head. This actor reappears several times more, always briefly and often filmed from behind, in postures that suggest bewilderment and despondency.

It is a sad film showing a tormented life by way of the recollections of friends and acquaintances who admired him, sometimes loved him, and generally presents a picture of a doomed genius.

Boris Spassky praises Planinc for his modesty. Alexander Beliavsky praises him for more substantial qualities by saying that it was very difficult to play against him – as if one was playing Fischer. Boris Kutin, former president of the European Chess Union, tells about Planinc's two-year suspension as a young player and about his first great success, the Vidmar Memorial of 1969, that Planinc won half a point ahead of Gligoric.

Mostly the talking is done by people that we do not know. Villagers from Brise, Planinc's place of birth, say that his mother came there because she was thrown out by her family for the sin of being pregnant of an illegiti-

mate child. We see friends, fellow-inmates of the institution where he spent the last part of his life, a female staff member of that clinic who had grown quite fond of him, a nun who remembered his exquisite long fingers delicately handling the chess pieces. We see a sculptor uttering artist's language while working on a statue of Planinc, commissioned by Slovenian chess players to make up for some of the neglect that Planinc had suffered during his many years in the institution. If everything goes according to plan, the statue will be placed somewhere in Bled.

We stood no chance

A lot of attention is given to a woman who had a love affair with him. She tells about the first time she was taken to the small place where Albin lived with his mother. She calls it the fortress.

Before they go inside, he warns her that his mother is crazy, but when she meets the mother she finds a small and gentle woman, not crazy at all, to whom she takes an immediate liking, and she is indignant that people have told such a lie to Albin. Later in the film we nevertheless learn that the mother ended up in the same institution as Albin himself.

His girlfriend plays chess herself and is able to appreciate the beauty of his games. She seems intelligent, energetic and friendly. A male friend of Albin's says in the film that while this relationship lasted, he looked radiant and walked straighter.

Albin and his girlfriend go buying

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furniture for his newly acquired flat in Ljubljana. The unspoken question hovers: a double bed or a single? They look at each other and understand. It will be a double bed.

But still, in the film she says: 'We never stood a chance.' She never managed to free Planinc from his cage, and she makes it clear that with the cage she doesn't mean chess. On the contrary. She says: 'Chess could not do it. How could I do it?' Planinc's cage, she implies, was his own mind, which made every step into the world outside it precarious.

When exactly did he have this relationship, and how long did it last? Such questions are almost never answered in the film, which is long on atmosphere but short on exact information such as dates and years. We are not even told the exact nature of his sickness.

Victim of Mrs. Velimirovic

In my database there is a gap in Planinc's games between 1962 and 1965 and another one between 1965 and 1968. As the two-year suspension that Kutin speaks about came after a junior tournament, it probably took place in that first period.

Georg Mohr writes in his obituary that the mother of a famous Yugoslav grandmaster, a high Party official, had accused Planinc of drinking, with the result that her son was promoted instead of Planinc, who was suspended. Contrary to Mohr, Kutin in the film does admit that alcohol was indeed involved in an otherwise insignificant event, and he is more specific about the name of that mother: Mrs. Velimirovic.

Strangely enough, the book *Yugoslav Chess Triumphs* from 1976 says that Planinc and Velimirovic, although fierce competitors over the board, were great friends in private life. Mohr, however, writes that Planinc was distraught for quite some time by his suspension and that his bitterness only grew deeper, so that the world of white and black became his only concern.

Knight exchanges

From his early youth, Planinc had been a manual worker, and in 1969 he was employed at a bicycle factory, silently analysing hypersharp lines of the Benoni, the Sicilian and the Arkhangelsk variation of the Ruy Lopez while doing his work.

During the Vidmar Memorial in Ljubljana he left the factory every day early to play in the tournament. To everybody's surprise he won it. The success changed his life – he became a professional chess player.

In *Totalni Gambit* we see a short newsreel with Bruno Parma, who is asked to name the favourites for tournament victory. Portisch, Gligoric, two Soviet grandmasters, he says. 'And there is another favourite one, the Slovenian player Albin Planinc, who plays a fairly strange kind of chess, either very high or very low.'

I thought this was remarkably prescient on Parma's part, until I realized that Portisch and the two Soviet grandmasters he mentioned didn't take part in that tournament and that Parma must have been speaking about another Vidmar Memorial, that of 1973. The film conveniently mixes a tale of 1969 with images of 1973. Long in atmosphere, short on details, as I wrote earlier.

Planinc's friend from the time before he was hospitalized, a chess player himself, relates that one day Planinc came to him saying that he couldn't stand the knights of his chess set anymore, and asked to exchange them for his friend's knights. His friend obliged, of course. Some time later Planinc returned them, saying that the new knights suited him even less.

Another incident, related by the same friend. Somebody asked Planinc for the time and he said that it was a quarter past six. A mutual friend said it was 6.20, which greatly agitated Planinc, who said he would have to leave because the implication was that he had been lying. And leave he did.

That friend also says that although Planinc had had no formal education,

he was a voracious reader with an enormous knowledge of almost any subject you could imagine. He had learned a lot from him.

Wheelchair, saliva, cha-cha-cha

At some point in the 1980s, I don't know exactly when, he was hospitalized. To a fellow inmate he said that he had been brought in by the police and that the psychiatrists were devils who would poison him. As to the nature of his sickness, severe depressions have been mentioned, but from the film it is clear that it must have been both mental and physical. The female staff member of the institution says that Planinc wanted to dance the cha-cha-cha with her, while in fact he was hardly able to stand straight.

Near the end he was in a wheelchair, unable to stop the saliva drooling from his mouth.

I didn't even manage to ascertain the exact date of his death. December 20th is most often given, but I've also seen December 23rd. I suppose Mohr is the best source, and he gives December 16th as the date of death. He also wrote that, like Mozart, Planinc was buried in a mass grave, but since Mozart was not really buried in a mass grave, I am not sure about Planinc's burial either.

The director of the film, Jan Cvitkovic, has written: '*Totalni Gambit* is not just about chess genius Albin Planinc. It is a film about "victims", humans who are sent to march in front of human first lines. Their task is to show us the appropriate path, even at the cost of their own lives.'

I would have liked to see a film in which Planinc was treated less like a symbol of the cannon fodder dying in the battle for human progress and more like an individual human being. More hard facts, even at the price of a bit less atmosphere. Dates, years, medical diagnosis. That said, the film was quite moving, and left me wondering, like his girlfriend, whether we, the chess community, could not have done more to save him. And just like her I thought: No, probably not. ■



Jan Timman

When chess comes to town...

In the summer of this year, Anatoly Karpov and Vishy Anand played two blitz games in the new high-speed train between Madrid and Valencia. The new train was capable of reaching a speed of 356 km/h, and the blitz games symbolized this speed on the chess board.

The Spanish railway company RENFE was not the only organization to stage a chess event this year. In Central Europe, Pavel Matocha organized his second Chess Train on the route Prague-Dresden-Wroclaw-Piestany-Vienna-Prague, with rapid games on all sections. Around the same time, Deutsche Bahn, together with the German chess federation, organized a rapid tournament, not in a train this time, but in a station: the Kaiserbahnhof in Potsdam.

The Kaiserbahnhof was built for Kaiser Wilhelm II at the start of the 20th century. The old Bahnhof Wildpark, dating from the middle of the 19th century, had fallen into disrepair. The Kaiserbahnhof's architect was Ernst von Ihne, and it was built in the style of an English cottage. The first foreign visitors were Theodore Roosevelt and Czar Nicholas II.

The rapid tournament carried the motto 'Logic meets Logistics' and was to be played by special teams from various countries. 'Trans-Europa-Schach-Express' was the name given to the team tournament. First, the countries on the route of the then train were selected: England, Austria, Poland, Russia, the Czech Republic and Switzerland. Holland was added to

the number, which was a good choice, since in 1918 Kaiser Wilhelm took the train in the Kaiserbahnhof to go into exile in our country. A team from the Lasker Gesellschaft completed the field. The national teams were of a special make-up: Board 1 had to be a star, preferably a living legend, as players of my generation are called. Then there were two junior boards for under-16 players, and the remaining boards were taken up by railway workers from the various countries.

I had decided to spend a few days in Berlin before the tournament, and the organization was supposed to pick me up in Apartments am Brandenburger Tor. There was a last-minute change when I was asked to walk to the Potsdamer Platz, where I would find the high Deutsche Bahn building, and to report to the reception desk. There I was met by Richard Lutz, CFO of Deutsche Bahn and also a strong amateur chess player. He had been the driving force behind the Potsdam tournament. Mr. Lutz first showed me the view of Berlin from the top floor of the building. Then we drove to Potsdam.

The play took place in the hall next to the beautifully restored railway carriages. One of those was said to have taken Lenin to Petrograd in 1917 to unleash the Russian Revolution. In another hall, the Lasker Gesellschaft had set up a modest exhibition featuring, amongst other things, the pieces that had been used in the Lasker-Schlechter match of 1910. They were surprisingly light.

Russia won the match. Although this does not sound surprising, they

were not the clear favourites on account of the relative weakness, on paper, of their railway workers. But they had two very good junior players, and Karpov, on top board, was in excellent form and scored the best result of all the GMs. Sometimes you could see that he had not prepared optimally, but he managed a few adroit escapes from awkward situations on the strength of his phenomenal technique.

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Oliver Kurmann

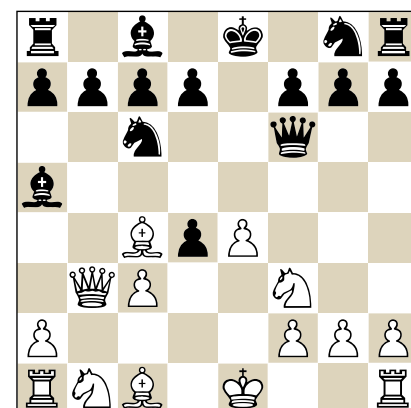
Anatoly Karpov

Trans-Europa-Schach-Express
SUI-RUS 2012

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♙c5 4. b4

In the 1980s, Kasparov did not yet play the Evans Gambit, and I have never played it against Karpov either, so it was interesting to see how he was going to fight it.

4...♙xb4 5.c3 ♙a5 6.d4 exd4 7.♚b3 ♚f6

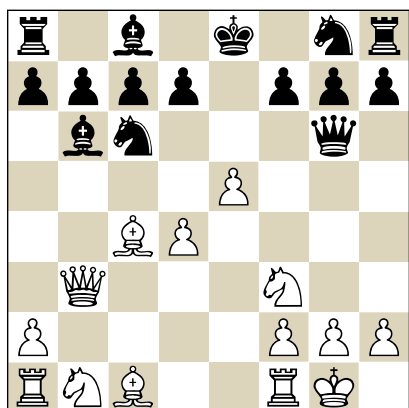


Surprisingly enough, Karpov goes for a really old line.

8.0-0 ♙b6 9.e5 ♚g6 10.cxd4

In the city match Rotterdam-Gouda in 1855(!) White played 10.♙e1. The

text is known from Bird-Chigorin, Hastings 1895.

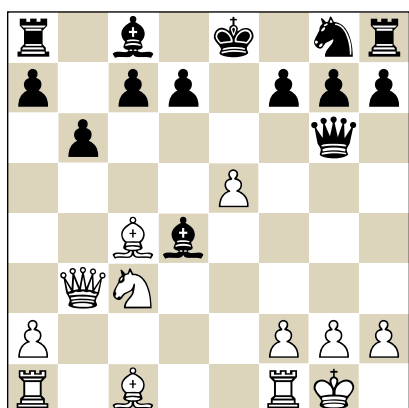


10...xd4 This pawn snatch is extremely dangerous. The solid alternative is 10...a5, intending to swap off the queen's bishop. This was seen in Pollock-Baird, New York 1889, and Short-Piket, Zurich 2001.

11.xd4 xd4 12.c3 b6

Remarkably enough, this is also the computer's first choice, although it quickly realizes that Black's outlook is not exactly rosy.

Chigorin played 12...h6, whereupon White could have created good attacking chances with 13.a3.



13.d5

These kinds of positions require rigorous action from White. The text is too cautious. 13.b5! b7 14.d5 would have yielded White a winning position. After the text Black will be able to free himself.

13...c6 Now Black controls the vital squares b5 and c5.

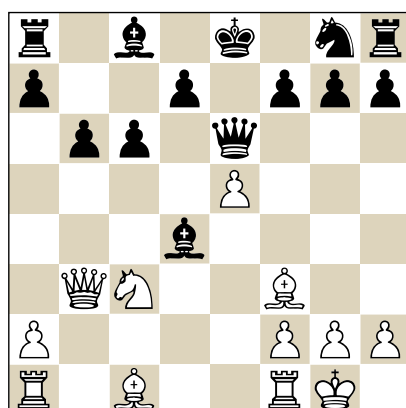
14.f3 e6

Karpov takes things too lightly. He should have gone 14...e7, aiming for kingside castling, after which Black can be quietly confident.

NEW IN CHESS



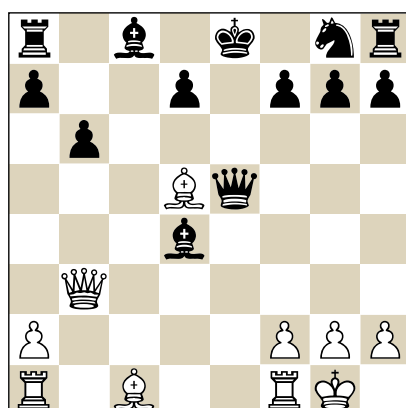
Anatoly Karpov managed a few adroit escapes from awkward situations on the strength of his phenomenal technique.



15.d5! Now Kurmann does takes his chance. Black is forced to capture in view of a devastating check on c7.

15...cxd5 16.xd5 xe5

Now the e-file is opened, but after 16...f5 17.a3! Black would also have been in trouble.

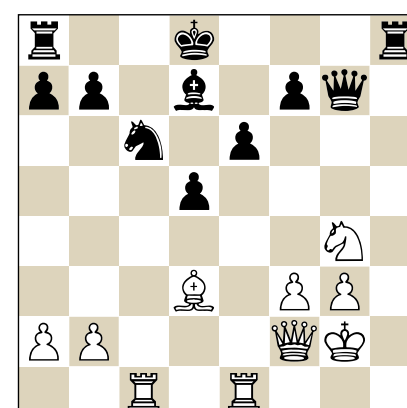


17.b1 A curiously passive move. Connecting the rooks was a bit too obvious. After 17.b2! Black would have

been left without an effective defence. After the forced continuation 17...e7 18.ae1 f6 19.xd4 xd4 20.e4! he would have to give his queen to stop the white attack. But even then his king will not find a safe haven.

17...a6! Suddenly Black is calling the shots. Karpov won fairly easily.

18.xa8 xf1 19.xf1 e7 20.a3 0-0 21.e1 f6 22.f3 d6 23.a4 g6 24.e2 a5 25.c6 d8 26.e8+ xe8 27.xe8+ f8 28.e2 c5 29.b2 e6 30.d3 xa2 31.c3 e6 White resigned.



Timman-Short

Trans-Europa-Schach-Express NED-UK
position after 24...d8

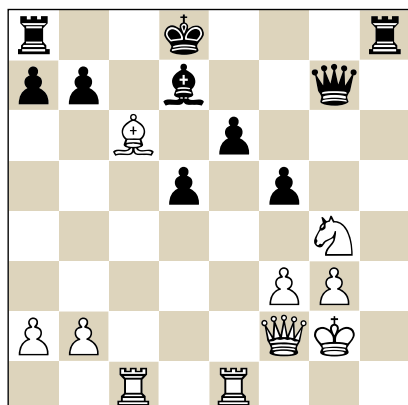
After an opening that went wrong I had to try and find compensation for the pawn.



Jan Timman

25. ♖b5 White wants to swap on c6 and then take control of the dark squares. Short reacts adequately.

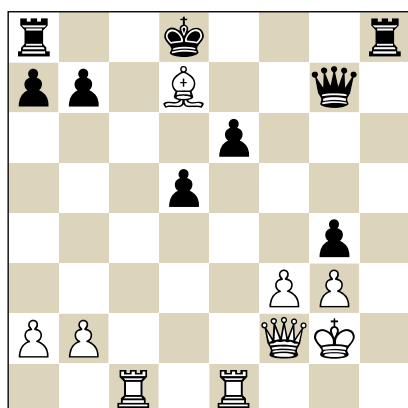
25... f5 26. ♖xc6



26... fxg4!

Aiming for a position with only major pieces in which the white king is more exposed than the black one.

27. ♖xd7



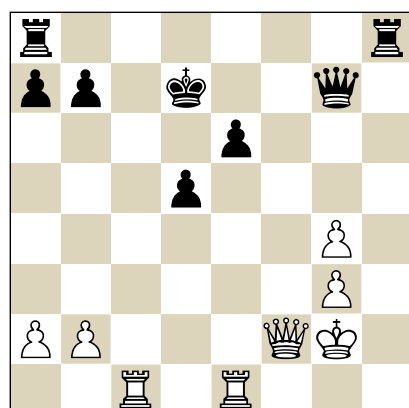
27... ♖xd7

Short played this quite fast. Both of us

had only a few minutes left, leaving you no time for finding anything better. But precisely at this point, Black could have sealed the game with a series of intermediate moves: 27... ♖h6!! 28. ♖h1 gxf3+ 29. ♖xf3 ♖d2+ 30. ♖f2 ♖xf2+ 31. ♖xf2, and now finally 31... ♖xd7. The double rook ending is an easy win for Black.

28. fxg4

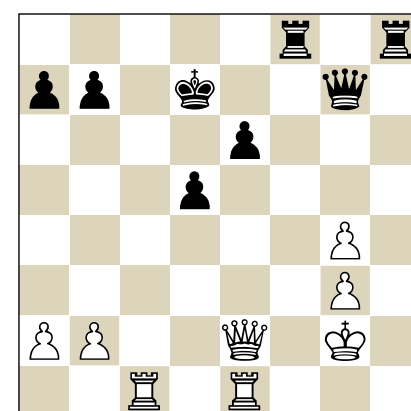
Now the position is dynamically balanced.



28... ♖af8

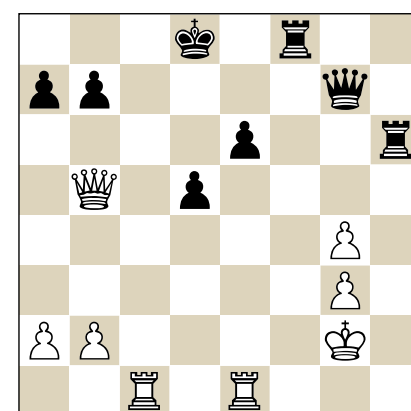
The crucial move was 28... ♖h7, intending to meet 29. ♖h1 with 29... ♖e4+. White's best bet is the cool 29. ♖f4!. After 29... ♖h2+ 30. ♖f3 ♖af8 31. ♖c7+ ♖e8 32. ♖xe6+ ♖d8 33. ♖d6+ both 33... ♖e8 and 33... ♖xc7 lead to a draw. Both kings are so exposed that the position contains several perpetual checks.

29. ♖e2



29... ♖h6? This position called for a move like 29... ♖d8. Now White takes over the attack.

30. ♖b5+ ♖d8



31. ♖c5!

Winning, since 31... ♖xb2+ will be seen off by 32. ♖c2.

31... ♖f7 32. ♖c8+ ♖e7 33. ♖c7+ ♖d6 34. ♖d8+ ♖d7 35. ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 36. ♖f8+

Black resigned.

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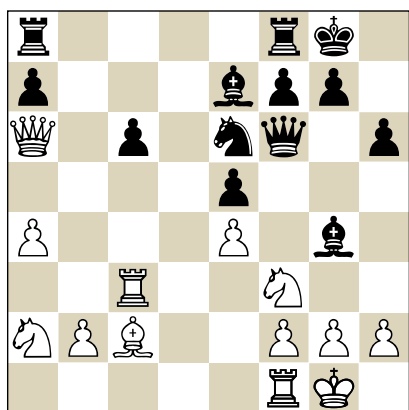
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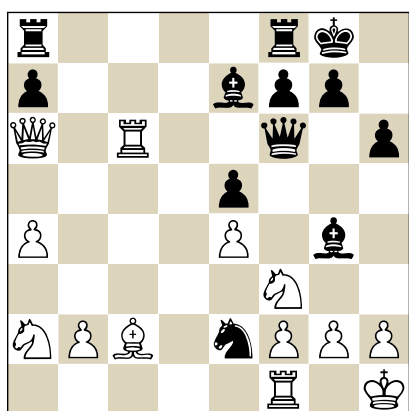
Marikova-Van Foreest

Trans-Europa-Schach-Express CZE-NED
position after 19. ♖a6

The black player, Jorden van Foreest, is 13 years old and one of the great promises of Dutch chess. He is a distant descendent of Arnold van Foreest, a three-time Netherlands champion at the end of the 19th century.

In the diagram position, Black can safely play 19...c5 with a strategic advantage. But Jorden had seen something better.

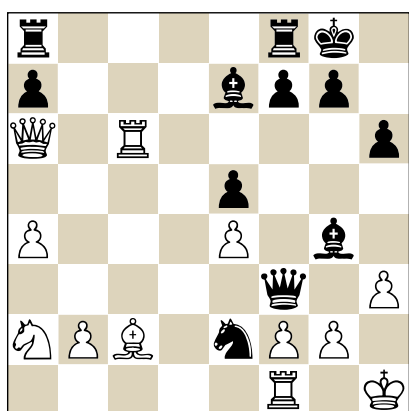
19... ♜f4! 20. ♖xc6 ♜e2+ 21. ♔h1



21... ♜xf3!

The point of the 19th move. But the combination is not yet finished.

22.h3

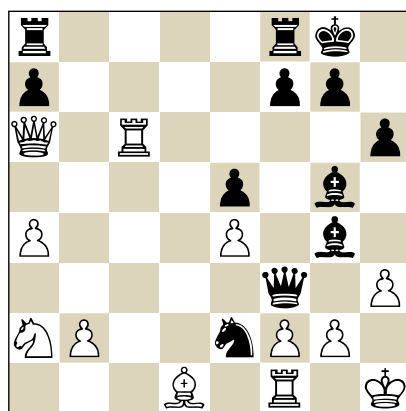


22... ♜g5!

Magnificent. If White now takes the queen, 23.gxf3, she will be mated with 23... ♜xf3+ 24. ♔h2 ♜f4 mate.

23. ♜d1

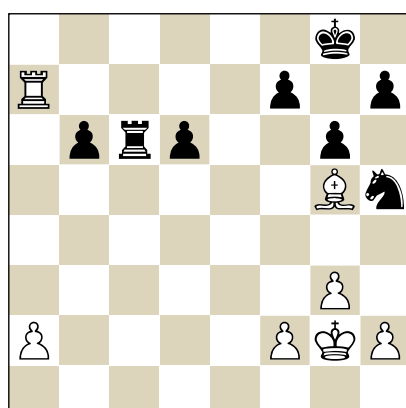
Enabling Black to round off the game in style. After 23.hxg4 ♜xg4 24. ♜d3 ♜fc8 Black would also be winning.



23... ♜xf3+! The same mating motif. White resigned.

European Club Cup

In Eilat, Israel, Socar Azerbaijan won the European club championship after a remarkable 5-1 victory over Tomsk-400 in the final round. Two games, decided by complete domination, caught my attention. Both games were played on the same day, viz. in the first round.



Giri-Rodshtein

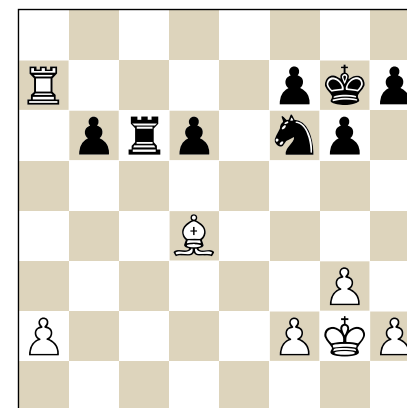
Eilat SHSM-64-Beer-Sheba
position after 28. ♜xa7

White has ample compensation for the pawn in view of the strength of his bishop. Yet it seems incredible that Black will lose this endgame in just a few moves.

28... ♜g7 Intending to redeploy the knight via f6. But this will not immediately solve all Black's problems.

29. ♜e3 On its way to the central square d4, while at the same time opening fire on the b-pawn.

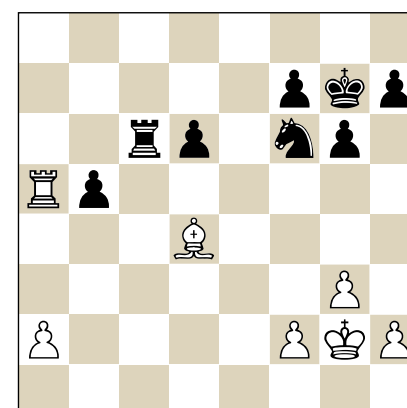
29... ♜f6 30. ♜d4



30...b5

Remarkably, this is also the computer's first choice. Black wants to protect his b-pawn. But there were other priorities, as we will see. Correct was 30... ♜c4 in order to chase the white bishop from the long diagonal. After 31. ♜xb6 d5 Black has nothing to fear.

31. ♜a5! Now Giri consistently starts aiming for a rook swap.



31... ♜c4

Another step in the wrong direction. Necessary was 31...g5 32. ♜xb5 ♜g6 in order to undo the pin on the long diagonal. After 33.a4 ♜c4 34. ♜e3 h6 35.a5 ♜a4 Black has chances of a successful defence.

32. ♜a1 ♜c1

This loses; but Black's situation was already critical, e.g. 32... ♜b4 33. ♜a6! ♜e4 34. ♜xd6 ♜e6 35. ♜xe6 fxe6 36. ♜f3 ♜f7 37. ♜xf6 ♜xf6 38. ♜e4, and White wins the pawn ending.

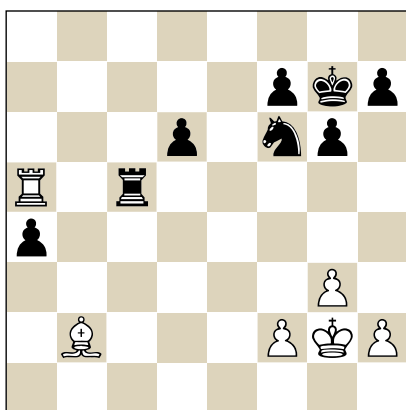
33. ♜b2 ♜c5 34.a4

Of course.

34...bxa4



Jan Timman

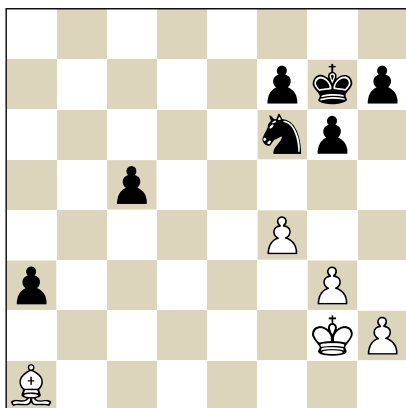


35. ♖xc5 It sounds incredible, but this winning exchange is not one of Houdini's first four moves. The computer still has a lot of problems with themes like perpetual pins.

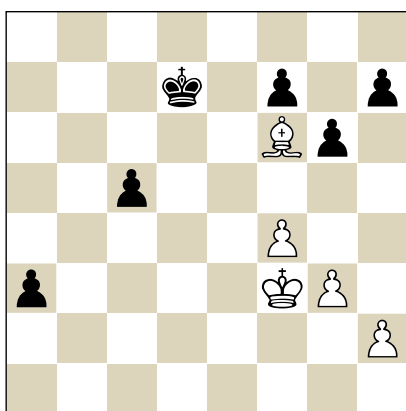
35...dxc5 36.f4

Achieving the perpetual pin. The black g-pawn cannot move.

36...a3 37. ♖a1



Although Black has played the computer's first choice many times, he is hopelessly lost, and he duly resigned. But he could have forced White to prove the point, because if Black gives up the knight immediately, White does not have an automatic win. After 37...♖f8 38. ♖xf6 ♖e8 39. ♖f3 ♖d7 White must not play the mechanical



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

40. ♖e4?, since this would be met by 40...♖e6 41. ♖a1 f5+ 42. ♖d3 ♖d5, and the white king does not have sufficient elbow room for the win. Sufficient for the win are 40.f5, intending to meet 40...gxf5 with 41. ♖f4, and 40.g4, followed by 41.g5 in order to maintain the bishop on f6.

The other game is very worthwhile in its entirety.

SI 4.1 – B94

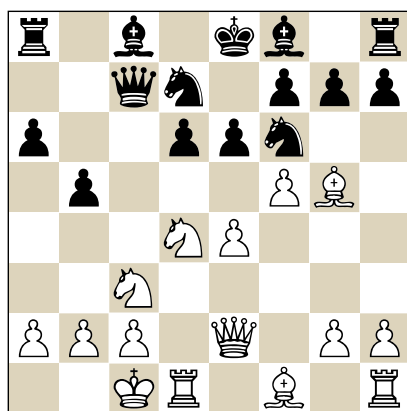
Andrey Volokitin

Shakhriyar Mamedyarov

Eilat Ashdod-SOCAR 2012

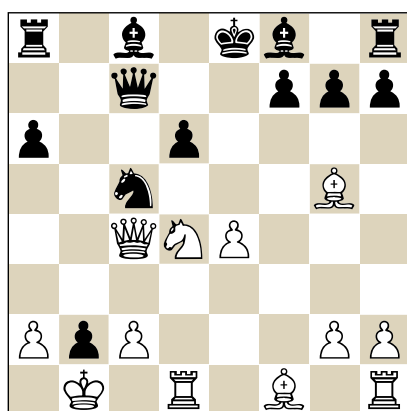
1.e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 a6 6. ♖e3 ♘g4 7. ♖c1 ♘f6 8. ♖g5 ♘bd7 9. ♖e2 e6 10.0-0-0 ♖c7 11.f4 b5 12.f5

The alternative was the cautious 12.a3. The text will lead to very sharp play.



12...b4 12...e5 would have been met by 13. ♘d5, as in Najer-Negi, Philadelphia 2008. The text is critical and makes great demands on White's competence.

13.fxe6 bxc3 14.exd7+ ♘xd7 15. ♖c4 cxb2+ 16. ♖b1 ♘c5



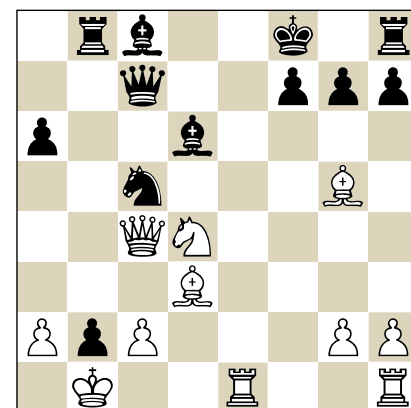
17.e5! A dangerous advance.

17...♖b8!

The correct reply. In Guseinov-Benitah, Marrakesh 2010, Black lost quickly after 17...dxe5 18. ♘b5! (not 18. ♖d5 ♖b7 19. ♘b5 in view of 19...♖b8!) 18...axb5 19. ♖d5 ♖e7 20. ♖xb5+. Slightly better is 19...f6 (instead of 19...♖e7), but then, too, White will get a large advantage after 20. ♖xb5+ ♖e7 21. ♖e3 ♘e4 22. ♖xe4 ♖b8 23. ♖d5!.

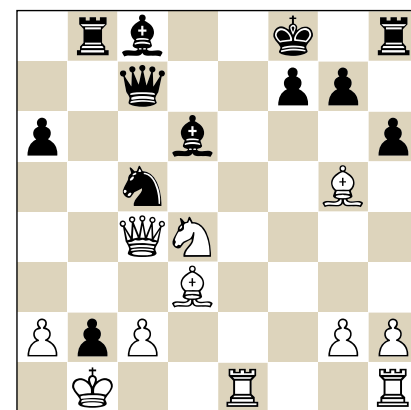
Mamedyarov undoubtedly knew the Marrakesh game, as he played very fast. But his preparation turned out to have an unexpected hole.

18.exd6 ♖xd6 19. ♖e1+ ♖f8 20. ♖d3



20...h6?

This is the computer's first choice, but it will be refuted brilliantly. Black's only effective defence was the computer's second choice, the startling 20...♖b4!. After 21. ♖xb4 ♘xd3 22. ♖a4 ♘xe1 23. ♖xe1 ♖d7 24. ♖c4 the position would probably be dynamically balanced. Black has the bishop pair, but his king has not yet found safety.



21. ♖d8!!

This is undoubtedly the most terrific move of the last few years. White sac-

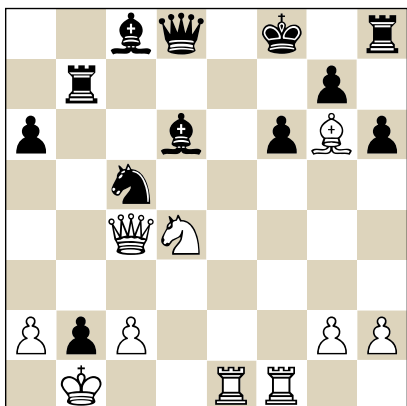
rifices a full piece for a tempo. In such a sharp position, this can be decisive. Black is forced to accept the sacrifice.

21...♔xd8 22.♖hf1

Now Black's problem is that it's hard to cover the f-pawn.

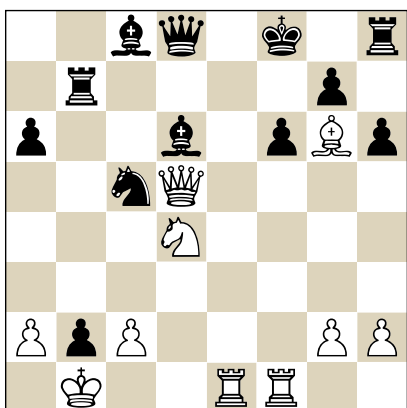
22...♖b7 22...f6 would have run into the devastating 23.♘c6.

23.♘g6 f6



24.♖d5 This looks like the final blow, but Black turns out to have a hidden defence. 24.♖e3! would have been devastating. Black has no defence against the threatened doubling on the e-file. After 24...♖e7 White will deal the death blow with 25.♘c6.

On the one hand it is a pity that Volokitin overlooked this, as it could have made the game a beautiful attacking specimen. On the other hand, it would have robbed us of the enjoyment of the amazing final position.



24...♖e7! In combination with the next move, an unexpected way out.

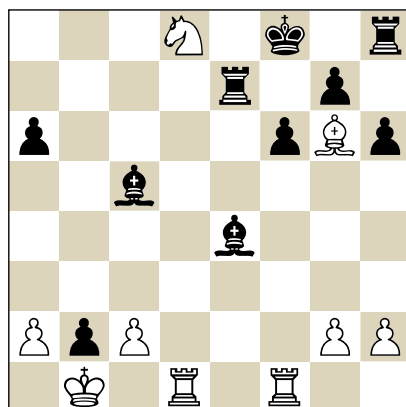
25.♘c6 ♘b7 Now the white knight is pinned. **26.♖xc5** White settles for an endgame with slightly better prospects.

26...♘xc5 27.♘xd8 ♘d5 28.♖d1 ♘e4

NEW IN CHESS



Andrey Volokitin played 'undoubtedly the most terrific move of the last few years'.



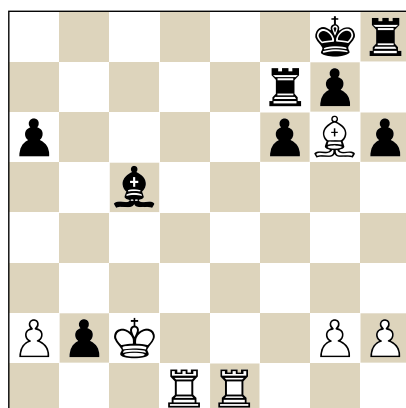
29.♘f7 White's only chance to make something out of it, which confuses Black.

29...♖xf7 Absolutely necessary was 29...♘xg6 30.♘xh8 ♘e8, and because of the locked-in knight White has no realistic winning chances. It is not even sure that he is better.

30.♖fe1!

Volokitin is alert again. The enemy king is driven into a corner.

30...♘xc2+ 31.♖xc2 ♖g8



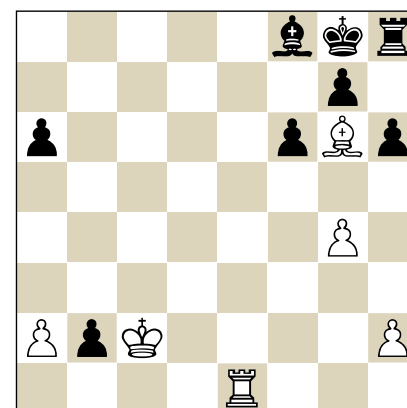
32.♖d8+

In this position, too, the computer fails. It regards 32.♘xf7+ as White's best move, although it is clear that White should aim consistently towards locking in the black king.

32...♖f8 33.♖xf8+ ♘xf8

At this point, Houdini assesses the position as +0.51 for White.

34.g4!



Total dominance. Despite his two extra pawns, Black is hopelessly lost, as in Giri's game. Perpetual pin and perpetual confinement are the themes. Mamedyarov resigned.

After White's last move Houdini's assessment increases slightly, but it stops at +0.86.

I am curious to know how long it will take before computers will be able to assess these kinds of positions correctly. ■

Boris Avrukh

CURRENT ELO: 2583

DATE OF BIRTH: February 10, 1978

PLACE OF BIRTH: Karaganda, Kazakhstan

PLACE OF RESIDENCE: Beer-Sheva, Israel



NEW IN CHESS

What is your favourite colour?

I have never thought about this ☺, probably blue and green.

What food makes you happy?

'French style' meat or good steaks. I also like Italian food.

And what drink?

All kinds of cold drinks, especially different types of Ice Tea and Ice Coffee.

What was the most interesting book you ever read?

Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, the only book I read twice, as I failed to understand it the first time ☺.

What is your all-time favourite movie?

Probably *The Green Mile*. I also liked the action movies *Taken* 1 and 2.

What is your favourite TV series?

The Russian comedy series *Interny*.

Do you have a favourite actor?

Tom Hanks, Kevin Costner, the Russian actor Ivan Ohlobystin.

And a favourite actress?

Sharon Stone.

What music do you like listening to?

Mostly Russian Pop music.

What was your best result ever?

My first Olympiad in Elista in 1998, where I scored 8 out of 10, including important wins against England and Russia-2. I took the gold medal on Board 6.

What was the best game you ever played?

Avrukh-Malakhov, Politiken Cup 2009.

Who is your favourite chess player of all time?

Garry Kasparov, for many reasons: his energy, killer instinct, he was always one step ahead in opening preparation and physical shape. In short, a fantastic combination of huge chess talent and super-professionalism.

Is there a chess book that had a profound influence on you?

Zurich 1953 by Bronstein.

What was the most exciting chess game you have ever seen?

Kasparov-Topalov, Wijk aan Zee 1999, and Gashimov-Grischuk, World Team Championship 2010.

What is the best chess country in the world?

Holland. The organization of tournaments is at the very highest level.

What are chess players particularly good at (except for chess)?

Cards, and I would also like to mention soccer (although it sounds strange).

Do chess players have typical shortcomings?

I wouldn't say so. They are just like any other person.

What is it that you appreciate most in a person?

Honesty and keeping your word.

And what is it that you dislike?

Speaking about somebody behind his back and not keeping your word.

Do you have any superstitions concerning chess?

I tend to develop them during a tournament, but most of them fail to work ☺.

Who or what would you like to be if you weren't yourself?

Lionel Messi.

Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?

Djokovic, the Israeli Prime Minister and Michael Jordan.

Is there something you'd love to learn?

New languages: Spanish and French.

What is your greatest fear?

A big war in Israel. Unfortunately, this fear is quite real.

If you could change one thing in the chess world, what would it be?

To find good professionals who can give chess a better image in the world. This worked in Israel with Boris Gelfand. After his match against Anand nobody asked me if chess is the game with dice ☺.

What is the stupidest rule in chess?

Zero tolerance in individual events.

What will be the nationality of the 2050 chess world champion?

Russian.

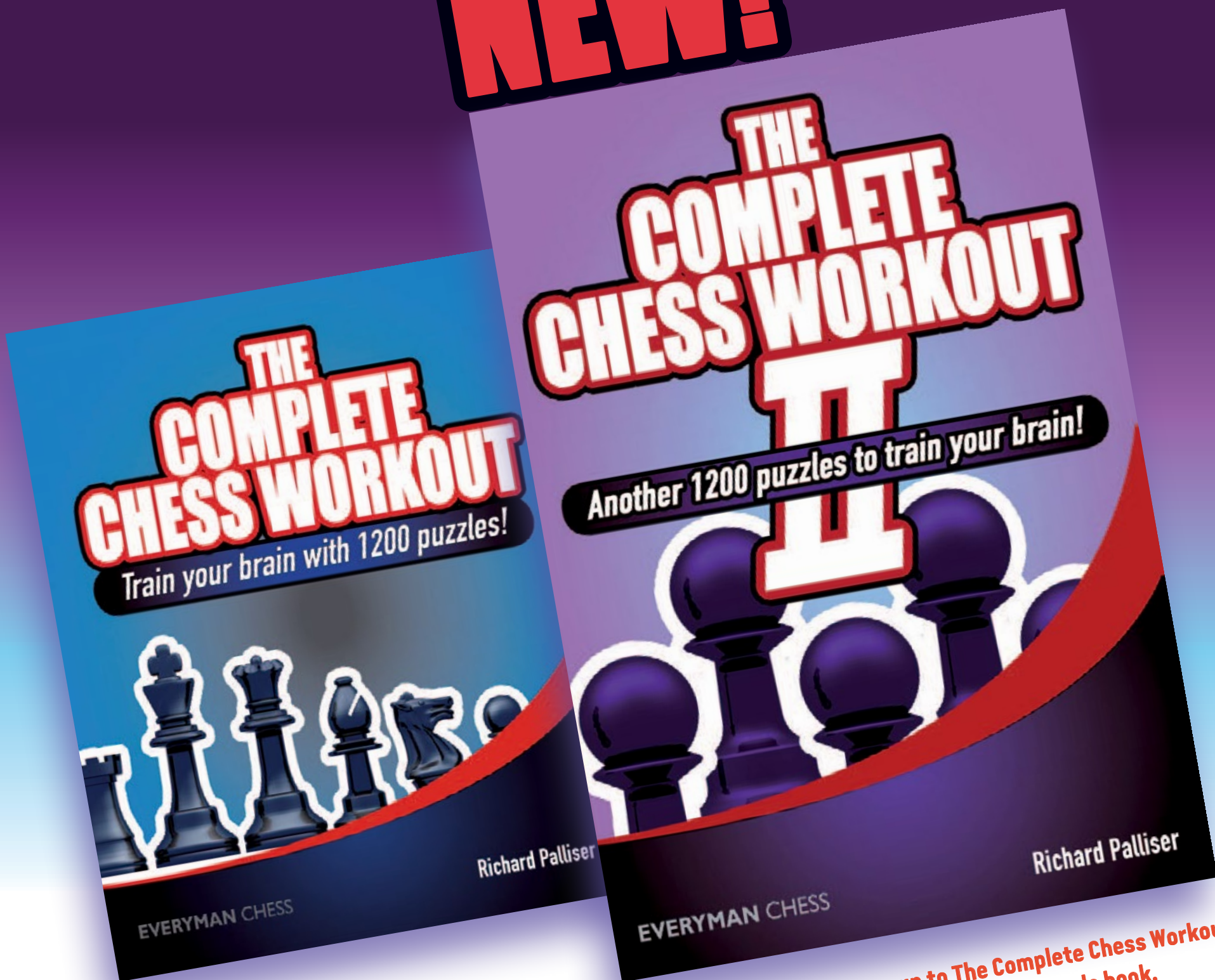
Is a knowledge of chess useful in everyday life?

I don't think so.

What is the best thing that was ever said about chess?

Never interfere with your enemy when he is destroying himself ☺.

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